

RCN conference Abstract

Title: Effectiveness of a collaborative approach to neonatal and children's nursing education in NHS Scotland

Type of presentation: concurrent

Aim of paper: to present an evaluation of a collaborative approach to teaching postgraduate education programmes to staff in neonatal and children's services in NHS Scotland.

Abstract (max 350):

Background: A substantial amount of work has been ongoing in NHS Scotland to develop and strengthen advanced nursing practice. In postgraduate education for neonatal and children's services, this has been underpinned by funding from NHS Education for Scotland of the post graduate certificate Qualified in Specialty (QIS) and MSC in Neonatal and Paediatric Advanced Practice. Two Scottish Universities have been delivering both qualifications in collaboration since 2013. A collaborative approach was expected to provide greater consistency in quality and content of the programme, and overcome the challenges associated with running courses with small student numbers, whilst ensuring service needs and expectations were met (Morgan et al., 2012; Pinfield et al, 2011).

Aim: To evaluate the effectiveness of the collaborative approach to teaching postgraduate education programmes from the perceptions of the students, the University staff and of paediatric and neonatal unit managers in practice.

Method: A mixed method approach was used to gather the views of the participant groups over two years. A survey of students in year 1 was followed up in year 2 with six focus groups with n=30 students. Semi-structured interviews with HEI staff (n=6) were conducted at two points in time. The views of neonatal and paediatric unit managers were gathered at the end of year 2, using both surveys and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics; qualitative data was transcribed and analysed thematically.

Findings: The courses have evolved over time, and students appear to be satisfied with their experience of being on the programme. The programmes largely met the needs of unit managers, who reported increased confidence and competence amongst students. The collaborative approach worked successfully in areas such as student recruitment and skills based work, although presented a number of challenges including working around university regulations and aligning methods of assessment.

Conclusion: Whilst working in collaboration can undoubtedly be challenging, the evaluation has highlighted a number of areas where a collaborative approach to teaching in higher education can work successfully and could be used for other specialist teaching programmes with small numbers of students.

Intended learning outcomes (n=3)

1. To highlight the different needs and expectations of students, university staff and nurse managers in relation to postgraduate education in neonatal and paediatric nursing.
2. To highlight successful aspects of a collaborative approach to teaching.
3. To understand the challenges of working in collaboration in higher education to deliver postgraduate education to nursing staff.

Recommended reading titles (max 3)

Morgan, C., Barry, C. and Barnes, K. (2012) Masters programs in advanced nursing practice: new strategies to enhance course design for subspecialty training in neonatology and paediatrics. *Advances in Medical Education and Practice* 3, 129-137

Pinfield, J., Pengally, T., Rouse, J. and Passant, M. (2011) Developing careers in neonatal nursing to meet service demands. *Nursing Standard*. 25, 23, 35-40.