Academic staff attitudes and beliefs about interprofessional education in a comprehensive health faculty

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Background: There is a need for data on staff attitudes and beliefs about interprofessional education (IPE) to inform the development and implementation of IPE curricula.

Summary of work: Structured interviews were conducted with degree program leaders across 11 health professional schools at Griffith University about their understanding of IPE, implementing an IPE curriculum, communication in health care teams and perceived attributes of other health professions.

Summary of results: Consensus was evident in the desire for early introduction of IPE in a degree, and in the belief that interprofessional collaboration needs to be embedded in routine practice. Staff significantly varied in their definitions and understanding of IPE, and in curricula strategies and topics that suited IPE. Most believe that health teams are hierarchical, although this varies across contexts, and may impact on communication within teams. There were strong, but different, perceptions of key attributes of other health professions.

Conclusions: This study revealed a range of knowledge, misconceptions, beliefs and attitudes about IPE. Professional development prior to implementing IPE needs to focus on attitudes, beliefs and interpersonal skills more so than on knowledge of others’ roles.

Take-home messages: Health professional staff in academic settings holds variable, strong views about IPE and other professions which need to be identified for effective curriculum implementation.