

## **Interprofessional Teamwork – “Cutting through Barriers”**

Against the backdrop of increasing specialization and multiprofessionalism in the healthcare sector, interprofessional skills and communication are gaining in importance as early as during training.

To strengthen interprofessional collaboration specifically in both surgery and (peri-)operative management, the project “Cutting through Barriers” (“Durch Barrieren schneiden”) is being implemented at the University Hospitals of Würzburg and Magdeburg as a workshop concept starting in the winter semester of 2016/2017. The surgical clinics and vocational schools of adult and pediatric care as well as surgical assistantship at the two universities are participating in the project. The interfaculty collaboration involves close exchange on both an educational and scientific level.

The three-part interactive workshop is aimed at sustainably improving skills and competencies related to interprofessional collaboration and communication. Together, medical students in their practical year (surgical trimester) and trainees in the second and third years of their training programmes simulate everyday situations in which they have to collaborate, reflect on what they experience, and practice techniques relating to the professional approach in prototypical or difficult situations.

The first of the three meetings has as its motto “Strong together.” There, the participants get to know one another, report on their experience and background, as well as practice giving and receiving feedback. During the second meeting – “Learning from and with each other in surgery” – they aim to solve an abstract problem together and simulate working together in theatre. During the third meeting, “Learning from and with each other during postoperative visits,” participants create a sociogram (a graphic representation of the relationships in an interprofessional group) and work through various ward rounds scenarios, in which the focus is on the joint management of a patient with an acute complaint.

During the workshops, participants work together to develop strategies to solve the problems that arise, and they recognize how their team interactions can be improved by taking full advantage of their own scope of action. They learn how to act more confidently and efficiently in an interprofessional setting and how to develop synergies to overcome complex challenges. Courses of conduct are developed to take advantage of the collaboration across all professions and to create an efficient and professional working environment of patient-oriented care over the long term. Students and trainees thus experience mutual appreciation and improve their understanding of the other professions.

Various methods of teaching and learning as well as feedback exercises are employed in the workshops. The components include small-group work, reflection exercises, role-playing, simulations, presentations, discussions, the critical incident technique (the identification of scenarios considered important to daily communication between various professions), 360-degree feedback, and surveys.

Lecturers from several different professions take part in the workshops. Each profession contributes to the learning success of the group as a whole with their specialized expertise. The team is made up of representatives from the fields of medicine, the social sciences, psychology, nursing, and surgical assistance.

The entire project is accompanied by scientific research, which contributes to the quality assurance and further development of the workshops. An accompanying research project has been designed to measure the positive effects of comprehensive training across professions and to investigate the effects of working within a team on projected stereotypes of the professions involved, patient care, personal skills, and communication.

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