

Abstract COEHRE Conference 2015

Title: International Intensive programmes as a strategy for developing key attributes for health professionals

Research

Poster (willing to change if needed)

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Background and Relevance: Excellency in health professionals requires a strong scientific and clinical education, specifically involving the development of a set of attributes. Short-term Intensive international programmes may be an innovative and sustainable strategy for such development, particularly for those students for whom long term Erasmus exchange mobility, is not financially accessible.

Aim: To characterize students' perception of the development of the following attributes: international, inter professional and inter cultural communication skills & awareness; team work and use of English as a working language, after participation in an intensive international programme.

Participants: Participants were 127 students, from 10 different European higher education institutions (7 different countries) that have participated between 2012 and 2014, in the 10-day intensive programme "Enabling Client Responsibility in Health Care" (funded by the Erasmus Life Long Programme).

Methods: This was a transversal study (survey). A questionnaire with 5 closed questions (4 point Likert scale) and 6 open questions was used. The students filled it in independently, on the last day of the intensive programme.

Analysis: The results of the 5 closed questions were analysed through descriptive statistics and the results from the 6 open-ended questions were subjected to content analysis (categories defined *a posteriori*).

Results: Between 60 and 74% of the students perceive "full achievement" of the attributes mentioned. The most significant themes identified as perceived gains contributing to the attributes defined were "better knowledge of oneself"; "development of tolerance and flexibility"; "increased awareness of cultural differences between disciplines and countries"; "speaking English in public" and "understanding the importance of interdisciplinary work for the patient sake".

Conclusions: The results suggest that short term international and inter-professional experiences may be an innovative strategy to explicitly develop some attributes considered essential for health and social care professionals in an ever growing global Europe. Ways to guarantee the sustainability of such courses need to be explored in the future.

Keywords: international and interprofessional communication skills & awareness, competences for health students