

Ethical Training in Allied Health Professional Education: Current Pedagogical Approaches to Ethical Training

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Abstract. Ethics education has been a concern of medical, nursing and allied health professions education for decades. There is growing evidence that the current informal curriculum of ethics and the moral environment of the professional practice are not enough for the healthcare students' professional/moral development. The aim of this study was to survey allied health schools and colleges about their present and planned approaches to providing healthcare ethics training. A web-based survey using mrInterview (SPSS corp.) was made available to 106 Institutional members of Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions. The survey was a cross-sectional, evaluative study developed and administered during the period of January 2006 and September 2006 through the Associate Dean's office of the College of Health Professions at Wichita State University. The response rate was 41%. Most institutions include ethics education as part of Health Professions education. Only 2 reported no ethics education at all. However, 46% of respondents replied that they didn't know if the training offered was effective yet only 16 % report they are considering changes while most are not considering any change. This survey provided a sampling catalog of current curricular assessment approaches used in a subset of AHP schools. Data revealed a need for careful, systematic assessment of education for moral developmental in health care education.

1. Introduction

Ethics education has been a concern of medical, nursing and allied health professions education for decades. There is growing evidence that the current informal curriculum of ethics and the moral environment of the professional practice are not enough for the healthcare students' professional and moral development. While much discussion has occurred worldwide, there is no consensus about how health care ethics should be taught nor what should be included in this training. The area is further confounded by the fact that an established model curriculum does not exist nor are there clear guidelines from professional licensing or professional accreditation bodies [1, 2]. Ethical education plays an important role in preparing individuals as well rounded and successful providers in contemporary healthcare. For example, results show a strong correlation between low levels of ethical thinking and more malpractice proceeding [3]. Many authors have expressed a need to evaluate how students' ethical reasoning is affected by their Healthcare education. This issue has been addressed in Psychology, Dentistry, and Medicine; however, few studies have examined ethical training in Allied Health education [3,4,5,6,7,8]. Given the growing concern about ethics in health care practice, it is important to explore the relation between ethical thinking and the training required to bring it about.

2. Experiment, Results, Discussion, and Significance

The aim of this study was to survey allied health schools and colleges about their present and planned approaches to providing healthcare ethics training. A web-based survey using mrInterview (SPSS corp) was made available to 106 Institutional members of Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions. The survey was a cross-sectional, evaluative study developed and administered during the period of January 2006 and September 2006 through the Associate Dean's office of the College of Health Professions at Wichita State University. The response rate was 41%. Most institutions include ethics education as part of Health Professions education. Only 2 reported no ethics education at all. While most institutions offer a formal course in ethics, 26% do not. 46% of respondents replied that they didn't know if the training offered was effective yet only 16 % report they are considering changes while most are not considering any change. [Figure 1and 2]

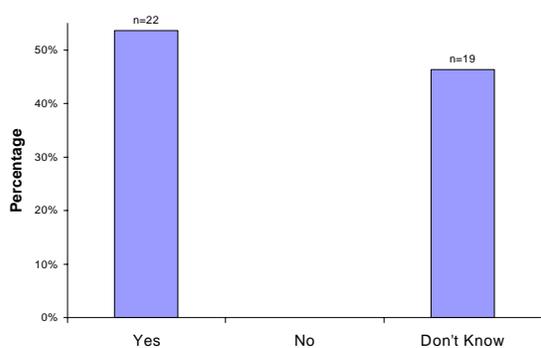


Fig. 1 Effective Training

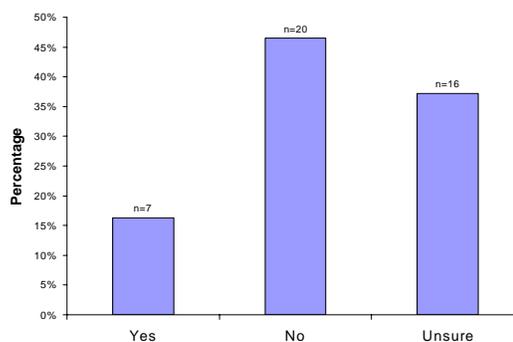


Fig. 2 Changes Consideration

3. Conclusions

This survey provided a sampling catalog of current curricular assessment approaches used in a subset of AHP schools. Data revealed that the current literature documents a need for moral developmental education in health care education.

4. Acknowledgements

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