

Nurses as Leaders in Research Collaboration

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Nurses have vast experience in collaboration. From the bedside nurse coordinating care for their patients to the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) working with other disciplines to manage care for complex patients, nurses are collaborators. Recently, the authors were voted as team captains for an interprofessional research committee to evaluate data captured from three years of two interprofessional activities to discover what it means for future activities and research opportunities. The team identified us as leaders of this collaborative study based on our profession, nursing. We humbly accepted and each led our sections of multiple professionals from this main group through multiple meetings and then reported back monthly to discuss our findings and progress.

Through this process, we began to reflect that collaboration is embedded in our nursing education, in our roles as educators, and in our practice. The nurse at every level is a collaborator with their patients or community to develop individ-

ual plans of care or community healthcare solutions in partnership with them, to the educator that coordinates experiential learning with clinical partners or simulation experiences with interprofessional faculty, to the researcher that unites with other nurses and professions to improve healthcare education and practice through studies like these. The core competencies of Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) focus on values and ethics, roles and responsibilities, communication, teams and teamwork (Interprofessional Education Collaborative, 2023). At the onset of this study, this research group established that they have shared values and ethics and agreed upon respectful communication. The roles and responsibilities, as well as the teams and teamwork competencies, came from the team recognizing nurses as leaders as effective communicators and experienced collaborators. Another connection is that to be a successful collaborator, one must also be a therapeutic communicator, yet another nursing quality instilled in our

formative education. Sometimes nurses are seen as the intermediary advocate between the patient and provider, but this too is a leadership role. Interprofessional collaboration and education should begin early in training of all health science students to prepare the future workforce with the team approach to provide patient-centered care. And in fact, that is exactly what this committee is analyzing, interprofessional education activities. Recognizing our contributions to healthcare and for these authors in this research project, is sometimes foreign to nurses, but it should not be. Nurses represent the largest member for the healthcare workforce with over four million in 2023 (National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, 2023). We must unite, use our voices, and lead the change that we want to see in healthcare, as we have the power as recognized leaders and researchers who actively engage with all healthcare professionals for the greater good of those we serve. ■

References

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