

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Developing a National Undergraduate Curriculum for Health Professionals in Ireland on health behaviour change (Making Every Contact Count)

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Introduction: (comprising context and the problem statement) The Integrated care Programme in Ireland aims to integrate prevention and management of chronic disease into clinical practice. It will require changes in service delivery to make every clinical consultation count to:

Routinely assess patients for their lifestyle risk factors for chronic disease

Support patients in changing their lifestyle related health behavior

Encourage self-management for patients with existing chronic disease.

Changing this culture and practice to Make Every Contact Count will require upskilling of our existing healthcare staff and teaching the skills and knowledge required in undergraduate training programmes for all health professionals as outlined in the National Implementation plan for Healthy Ireland in the Health Services (2015-2017).

Short description of practice change implemented: All new staff in the Irish health service will "Make Every Contact Count" by routinely assessing patients risk factors for chronic disease and carrying out a lifestyle behavior change intervention as part of all clinical interactions.

Aim and theory of change: In 2015, the Health and Wellbeing Division, HSE established a collaborative between the Higher Education Institutions in Ireland to develop a competency based national standard undergraduate curriculum for medical, nursing and allied health professionals to support the integration of chronic disease prevention into clinical practice by Making Every Contact Count through brief interventions.

Targeted population and stakeholders:

Targeted population: All undergraduate students on health professional degree programmes.

Key stakeholders are: HSE, HEI's, all service users including those at risk of chronic disease and who have chronic diseases.

Timeline: The curriculum will be delivered in relevant courses in HEI's in Ireland from September 2017.

Highlights: (Innovation, Impact and outcomes) This is the first time that a collaborative standard competency based national curriculum for healthcare professionals has been developed in Ireland.

Collaborative health service and education initiative

Shifts the emphasis towards chronic disease prevention in training healthcare professionals

Evidence informed curriculum: The curriculum includes lifestyle choices and personal wellness, communicating with patients for chronic disease prevention and health behaviour change interventions to Make Every Contact Count.

Comments on sustainability: Supports sustainable change in the routine delivery of lifestyle behaviour change interventions as part of all clinical consultations.

Comments on transferability: Internationally transferable into other undergraduate training programmes for healthcare professionals.

Conclusions: (comprising main findings)

A nationally directed, collaborative approach was useful in:

Creating leadership and commitment to the curriculum across all HEI's

Providing a multidisciplinary approach to its development

Supporting the collective exchange of knowledge and resources.

Supporting the implementation across all HEI's in Ireland.

Discussions: New staff recruited in the HSE will have the skills and knowledge to carry out brief interventions as a routine part of all their clinical consultations.

Lessons learned: The importance of champions within positions of influence in each HEI was crucial to support the curriculum development and implementation.

Progress to date: Curriculum has been developed and plans for implementation in each HEI are being developed.

Keywords: undergraduate health professional training; health behaviour change; brief intervention skills; curriculum; chronic disease prevention
