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**Title**

Student evaluation of an online inter-professional ethics learning tool

**Objectives**

Multi-disciplinary/inter-professional working is viewed by the NHS as an important means of achieving person-centred care1. To promote inter-professional learning and working, undergraduate pharmacy, physiotherapy, nursing, midwifery and medical students complete inter-professional education tasks throughout their degrees at the University of Keele. This study reports on student feedback for one of these exercises which uses a commercially available online ethics learning tool, known as the Values Exchange2. The online tool consists of an ethical case which the student works through individually followed by participation with an inter-professional group discussion board, on which the student discusses the issues raised, and group completion of a summary of their discussion. The aim of using the tool is to enable students to develop their ethical problem-solving skills, communicate with students outside their immediate profession and to promote team and inter-professional working.

The aim of this evaluation was to determine whether use of the online learning tool helped to:

* Further develop students’ ethical reasoning skills through completion of an ethical case
* Raise awareness of the ethical viewpoints of different professional groups

**Methods**

This is a retrospective review of student evaluations of the learning experience from the 2015, 2016 and 2017 student cohorts.

An evaluation questionnaire composed of statements about the online learning tool and the learning experience was circulated to students following completion of the exercise. Students were asked to indicate their opinion of each statement using a 5 point Likert rating scale. Free text comment fields were included to allow students to expand on their views.

Responses to the evaluation questionnaire were compared using the chi-squared test, and free text comments analysed using basic thematic analysis.

**Results**

Across the 3 years, 1313 students were asked to complete the online exercise as part of their ethics learning. 1051 (80%) completed the online ethics case, with 581 students (55% of the total who completed the case - 218 pharmacy, 136 medicine, 128 physiotherapy and 99 nursing/midwifery) providing feedback on their experience. Table 1 shows responses to the evaluation statements:

*Table 1: Percentage response to evaluation statement (2015, 2016 and 2017 combined)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement** | **% Response with positive agreement (‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’)** | **% Response with neutral or disagreement (‘Neutral’, ‘Disagree’ or ‘Strongly Disagree’)** |
| The online learning resource adds an additional dimension to developing ethical reasoning skills | 72% | 28% |
| Completing the case helped me to explore the ethical issues in depth | 71% | 29% |
| The discussion board allowed me to explore the ethical issues in depth | 65% | 35% |
| The online tool is a suitable format to learn alongside students from other disciplines | 64% | 36% |
| Completing the online IPE process has raised my awareness of the views of other professionals | 69% | 31% |

Chi-squared analysis of the responses from 2015 and 2017 demonstrated a significant increase in the number of students reporting that the discussion board allowed in-depth consideration of the ethical issues (p<0.05) and in the number of students who felt that the online tool was a suitable format to learn alongside students from other disciplines (p<0.05).

**Conclusion**

Approximately two thirds of students felt that the online tool enhanced their ethical reasoning and was a valuable inter-professional learning experience. The percentage of students giving positive feedback has increased over the 3 years of the study and this increase was significant for two of the key evaluation statements. This could be a result of our experience allowing us to refine the use of the online tool.

**Keywords**

Values Exchange; Interprofessional learning; Ethics

**References**

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