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Perception of Healthcare Professionals on Interdisciplinary Teamwork at Teaching Hospital Karapitiya

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Background: Interdisciplinary team work is a key requirement to provide better patient care. Different professional and non-professional health care staff gets together and work in this team to achieve desirable health outcomes from the patients.

Objectives: This qualitative study was conducted to explore perceptions of healthcare professionals towards interdisciplinary team work and how human errors could occur due to poor team work.

Methodology: In-depth interviews were conducted to collect data from 24 health care professionals (medical officers, pharmacists, medical laboratory technologists, radiographers, physiotherapists and nurses) at the Teaching Hospital Karapitiya. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis method.

Results: Four themes were emerged during the study. First one was 'interdisciplinary teamwork assist better patient care'. Under this theme three sub themes were identified. Those are 'value of individual contribution, barriers to collaborate, role of a pharmacist in interdisciplinary team work'. The second theme was "good communication for better collaboration". Under this theme three sub themes were observed; 'communication among health care professionals, communication between health care professionals and 'patients and barriers to communicate'. The third theme was 'proper management of physical and human resources enhance team work'. The final one was 'attitude transformation towards professional cooperation'. Poor professional mentality, authoritarianism, insufficient carder, heavy workload, insufficient working area, insufficient instruments (like beds and operation machines) personnel problems and personal attitudes were the main perceptual barriers exist in the system that would prevent good team work.

Conclusions: The study results showed that interdisciplinary approach is more practical and effective. Services of pharmacists and physiotherapists in a ward have a great potential to enhance team work. Communication barriers between professions, lack of inter-professional respect were identified as barriers for interdisciplinary teamwork. In- service programmes and monthly ward meetings in proper manner would create good relationships and team work among professionals.

Keywords: *Inter- disciplinary team work, professionals, communication, patient care, authoritarianism*