Hearing from our Health Mentors: Impact of a Longitudinal Interprofessional Education Program

Ashley Baronner, BS, MSII
Faculty Advisor: Lauren Collins, MD
Elena Umland, PharmD, Carolyn Giordano, PhD, Edwin Lim, BS, PharmD Candidate
Introduction

- Mixed-methods study to evaluate the perspectives of the Health Mentors in the Jefferson Health Mentors Program (JHMP) relative to impact of program

- Correlate these responses to the Interprofessional Education Collaborative’s (IPEC) Competencies
  - Values/Ethics
  - Roles/Responsibilities
  - Interprofessional Communication
  - Team and Teamwork
Background: JHMP

• JHMP is a two-year interprofessional education (IPE) curriculum

• Students from six healthcare professions participate

• Health Mentor (HM) is an adult of any age who lives with one or more chronic conditions or impairments

• Goal is to utilize IPE interventions to promote high quality, patient-centered, team-based care of chronic conditions
One half of adults in the United States suffer from one or more chronic health conditions (Ward et al. 2012).

Early exposure to people living with chronic disease and to other health professions’ roles/expertise may ultimately lead to achievement of the Triple Aim.
Senior mentor programs are designed to promote geriatric education and patient-centered care (Eleazer, Wieland, Roberts, Richeson & Thornhill, 2006)

Limited literature (Towle et al. 2010)
- Program effect on students
- Patient outcomes

Patients report raised self-esteem and empowerment (Wykurz and Kelly, 2002)

Senior mentors enjoy the companionship with students (Towle et al. 2010)

Pilot study findings: may promote skills such as attentive listening, empathy, and a holistic approach to care
Methods: Quantitative

- HMs who completed the JHMP in Spring 2014 were mailed a short survey.
- HMs were asked to evaluate student teams according to IPEC core competencies, to rate their own health status and to describe any change in health outcomes by participating in program.
- Program impact was evaluated using a 4-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree).
  - Questions grouped by IPE core competency.
Methods: Qualitative

- HMs were asked to identify examples of impact of the program on:
  - Overall health
  - Health behaviors
  - Knowledge of wellness or self-care; home and medication safety; and health and wellness goals

- HMs were also asked to list 2-3 ways the program could be a better experience in the future

- 10 HMs participated in a focus group

- A thematic analysis and frequency count of open-ended responses were completed
Results: Demographic Information

- **Response rate:** 93/120 (77.5%)
- **Average (± SD) age:** 66.9±14.4
- **Gender:** 62% female, 38% male
- **Ethnicity**
  - 64.1% White/Caucasian
  - 28.3% Black/African-American
  - 5.4% as Asian/Pacific Islander,
  - 1.1% Hispanic
- **Average number of years a HM participated in the program:** 3.39±1.4
Results: Quantitative

- HMs rated the student teams positively relative to all of the IPEC competencies’ four domains
  - Average (+/- SD) responses
    - Values/ethics: 3.93 +/- 0.36
    - Roles on the healthcare team: 3.82 +/- 0.42
    - Communication: 3.69 +/- 0.44
    - Teamwork: 3.80 +/- 0.50

- Mentors rated their satisfaction with the JHMP 9.13 +/- 1.43
  (10 = Highest, 1 = lowest)
Results: Qualitative

- HMs reported learning useful information pertaining to:
  - Home safety
  - Self care
  - Medication usage and safety
  - Nutrition
  - Exercise
  - Sleep patterns
  - Goal setting

- 62/93 open-ended responses pertaining to personal health status
  - 50% positive, 27% negative, and 23% neutral

- 54/93 open-ended responses regarding health behaviors or ability to manage health changed as a result of volunteering in this program
  - 93% positive, 7% neutral
Results: Major Themes

- Improved health status
  - “I’ve been more active on a regular basis”
  - “I am willing to listen and take charge of my health”
  - “I feel more accountability to follow through with my health goals”

- Learned health behaviors
  - “I take my medications daily and exercise most days”
  - “Taking medications better, keeping up with doctors, and eating healthier”
  - “More alert to my needs as a senior”

- Wellness and self-care
  - “I’ve always understood the importance of wellness and caring for myself, but each student offered suggestions pertaining to their field of study”
  - “Suggested drinking more water and doing more exercise”
  - “Simply paying more attention to yourself”
Results: Major Themes

- Home safety knowledge
  - “Securing rugs and installing grab bars in bathrooms among other examples”
  - “The team pointed out my loose area rugs, and that I held on to the handle of the door of my refrigerator when I climbed up a small ladder. Very unsafe!”
  - “Recommended a carbon dioxide detector”

- Medication safety knowledge
  - “Organized medication and set schedule of when to take it”
  - “Where to store medications”
  - “Something I knew, but making sure to use a monthly sorter helped on days I could not remember if I took my AM pills”
Health and wellness goals

- “The students helped me set attainable goals for exercising, now I need to implement!”
- “Goal set loose weight- lost 10 lbs February 2014, April goal met”
- “The discussion reinforcing contacts and my health care providers and improving personal support”
- “Journal keeping gives you a better pattern to eating and taking medications”
Results: Major Themes

- **Program Impact**
  - “I found compassion, which encouraged me to continue fighting for my health”
  - “I think it’s a great program. I believe the students that I worked with have a better understanding of chronic illness in such that it affects everyone differently.”
  - “Perfect experience for me as a patient with advanced cancer. Students were considerate and open to my sharing how I felt about end of life decisions, including how health care professionals can enhance the quality of life of someone like myself. Enjoyed the experience.”

- **Recommendations**
  - HMs suggested that the program incorporate additional visits and facilitate ongoing communication
Results: Focus Group

Community
- Interprofessional healthcare teams
- Improved management of chronic conditions
- Achievement of Triple Aim

Student Teams
- Achievement of IPEC core competencies
- Improved understanding of chronic conditions

Health Mentor
- Sense of fulfillment from opportunity to give back
- Improved personal health outcomes
Results: Focus Group

- “I lost 12 lbs, I never walked before program, started with 5 minutes, I am also off certain BP meds.”

- “I taught my students that we have feelings and deserve to be treated as a person not just medical condition.”

- “The students questioned my partner about what it was like to live with someone with chronic illness, and they demonstrated interest in my caregiver. I felt that this really showed empathy and insight.”
Discussion

- Mentors rate their student teams highly in all competency domains and express positive personal outcomes by participating in the JHMP

- Health Mentors strongly value their role in shaping future medical professionals
  - Mentors felt empowered by the experience
  - Mentors enjoyed the companionship of their student teams

- A team approach to chronic illness management may lead to a more positive mindset and better health outcomes in patients
Discussion

• Student teams who participate in a longitudinal IPE curriculum can have a positive impact on their Health Mentor partners

  • Mentors felt that the students successfully achieved the IPE core competencies

• The skills developed may promote empathetic, team-based, and patient-centered chronic illness care

• IPE curricular innovations like this one may help to teach students effective strategies for achieving the Triple Aim
Discussion Questions

- Do the *perceived* positive personal outcomes of the Health Mentors correlate with improved health outcomes?
  - If so, is this only a short term finding or long term impact?

- Does the JHMP improve the health outcomes of not only the health mentors, but also the future patients of students who have participated in the program?
Acknowledgements

- Jefferson Center for Interprofessional Education
- Lauren Collins, MD
- Elena Umland PharmD, Carolyn Giordano PhD, Edwin Lim (BS)
- JCIPE Team
- Participants in the Jefferson Health Mentors Program
THANK YOU!