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Learning intraprofessional collaboration by participating in a consultation programme: What and how did primary and secondary care trainees learn?

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Background

The growing number of patients that require overview and management in both primary and secondary care requires collaborative competencies of primary and secondary care professionals. Knowledge about *inter*professional collaboration and education is rising, but little is known about *intra*professional collaboration and education between doctors of various disciplines. General practice trainees (GP-trainees) and internal medicine trainees (IM-trainees) were offered an innovative consultation programme to learn intraprofessional collaboration, with specific focus on consultation between the two disciplines. The programme started with a plenary kick-off meeting where trainees and trainers discussed optimal collaboration and mutual prejudices. In the following nine months GP-trainees could use a webbased tool to consult IM-trainees. Supervision by trainers and discussion in the peer group were organised.

Aim

To understand what was learned and what factors contributed to the learning process.

Methods

We conducted focus groups with the trainees and their supervisors and mentors to gain information on what

and how the trainees learned. Three focus groups were organised with (1) GP-trainees, (2) IM-trainees and (3) GP-mentors and IM-supervisors. The transcripts of the focus groups were analysed according to qualitative content analysis. A deductive and an inductive approach to analysis were combined.

Results

Eighteen persons participated. Trainees reported that they gained knowledge about and skills in collaboration and consultation they could not have gained otherwise. Furthermore, the programme offered learning opportunities in most of the other roles of the CanMEDS model. Interaction, by meeting one another and by discussing cases with their mentors or supervisors, appeared to be a key factor in the learning process. Meeting one another, talking about preconceptions and enthusiasm of the mentors and supervisors facilitated the learning. Technical problems and lack of information were barriers in the learning process.

Conclusion

In a consultation project a broad variety of competencies can be gained by primary and secondary care trainees.

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