

The positive impact and potential of an inter-professional stroke education programme

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Introduction: Stroke units save lives. An important feature of such units is the provision of co-ordinated treatment and rehabilitation by inter-professional team (IPT). It is also key that the IPT receives ongoing specialist education. Despite this there is a distinct lack of comprehensive stroke specific training programmes. An education programme covering the entire patient pathway was developed in order to address this educational deficiency.

Method: An Inter-Professional Stroke Course, run by Nottingham University Hospitals & Health Education East Midlands, was delivered to IPT stroke staff and consistently evaluated throughout 2013. Education was provided by stroke physicians, physiotherapists, occupational & speech therapists, a stroke survivor, psychologists, early supported discharge teams & palliative care staff. Delegates also received teaching regarding anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, thrombolysis, NIHSS, stroke recognition and treatment, complications and the role of hyperacute and rehabilitation nurses.

Results: Of respondents to a delegate questionnaire, 94/1% said their professional practice was influenced by the course. Qualitative data indicated that professional practice had altered in terms of IPT communication and issues surrounding direct patient care. Furthermore, over 70% said their knowledge, confidence, job satisfaction and patient care and IPT communications improved as a result of the course. Course attendee numbers increased throughout 2013.

Conclusions: The positive effects of the education programme on IPT members has the potential to impact on a number of stroke patient outcomes. The increasing number of delegates and positive feedback from attendees indicates the courses' high quality and professional reputation.