Team dynamics

Interprofessional teams form the basis of many healthcare problem-solving and decision-making mechanisms. However, more than 70% of medical errors are attributable to dysfunctional team dynamics. The recent suggestion that health care teams are more complex than nonmedical teams suggests that we require more sophisticated knowledge of team dynamics and processes.

The mechanisms of dysfunctional interprofessional teams focusing on affective, behavioral, and cognitive effects are explored. We argue that interprofessional composition impacts team dynamics by increasing the likelihood of affective conflict, which mediates a decrease in elaborative behaviors and open-mindedness.

The hypotheses are investigated using a cross-sectional, correlational design. Survey data received from 218 members of 47 interprofessional teams employed in an acute care setting, representing a 39% response rate, is used to investigate two moderated mediation pathways.

Analysis supports a significant relationship between interprofessional composition and affective conflict but only when team rate highly for professional identification. Results also support a dual moderated mediation pathway through which professional diversity has a dysfunctional effect on debate and open-mindedness.

A range of strategies emerge from the findings to minimize dysfunctional interprofessional team dynamics. These include the use of leadership strategies, such as transformational styles, reinforcement of shared values such as patient-centeredness, and development of a shared group identity [1].

[1]

Mitchell R, Parker V, Giles M, Boyle B. The ABC of health care team dynamics: understanding complex affective, behavioral, and cognitive dynamics in interprofessional teams. Health Care Manage Rev. 2014 Jan-Mar;39(1):1-9. doi: 10.1097/HCM.0b013e3182766504. PubMed PMID: 24304597.