INTER PROFESSIONAL STUDY: DOES IT WORK AT MASTERS LEVEL?

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Although gaps in patient care and basic research in wound healing were clearly driving forces for the setting up of many courses, it was subsidiary aims such as the breaking down of barriers, improvement in collaboration and mutual understanding of individual roles that encouraged educationalists to provide interdisciplinary courses. It would appear however that these aims are more achievable at postgraduate level where students enter a course having already developed of their own professional role and are therefore better equipped to understand those of others (Pirrie et al 1998).

Although course organisers may be personally committed to the concept of interdisciplinary education, they need to be aware of the personal motives of their target population in order to produce a clear rationale for providing a course.

Motives will vary due to professional demands: nurses’ primary motives may be to seek a better understanding of the subject area in order to provide better care for their patients whereas doctors are clearly requiring a higher degree for progression within their profession.

Does it provide personal gain for the student as well as improvement in patient outcome? Is the main incentive for pursuing study at this level course content or the challenge of studying alongside other health professionals?

There appears to be no clear evidence that interdisciplinary education at Masters level is more effective than other courses but factors that inhibit or facilitate the delivery will be discussed based personal experience and evaluation of running an interdisciplinary course for 11 years.