Promoting Communication and Patient Care through Interprofessional Physical Therapy and Medical Student Simulations

Ashley Parish, PT, DPT, CRT, CCS, John D. Lowman, PT, PhD, CCS
Todd Peterson, MD, FACEP and William S. Brooks, PhD

Purpose
Interprofessional simulation is frequently utilized in healthcare education to promote problem solving, collaboration, and communication. However, simulation involving both physical therapy and medical students is uncommon. Since 2019, a physical therapy and medical student simulation, consisting of two scenarios, has been utilized in the UAB Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Program and School of Medicine.

Methodology
53 first-year DPT and 160 second-year MD students participated virtually in two 30-minute simulations (Fig. 1) in fall 2020. Participants completed an optional survey to assess the effectiveness of simulations.

Results
167 (78%) participants completed an optional survey to assess the effectiveness of simulations.

Quotes From Evaluations
• “I think learning to interact with a team virtually is a skill that’s important and needs practice like this.”
• “I enjoyed working together with someone in a new field I haven’t interacted with before.”
• “I enjoy working interprofessionally as I get to learn more about the perspectives and thought processes of other health care professionals. I also learned a lot about how to perform a successful, informative handoff.”

Conclusion
Interprofessional simulation among physical therapy and medical students is a valuable tool to promote teamwork, knowledge of roles, communication skills, and patient care. Ninety-five percent of participants reported that skills learned during simulation will carry into an actual clinical setting and recommend this form of learning for future learners.

Learning Objectives:
• Develop appropriate communication and hand off skills between medical and physical therapy students.
• Promote active listening and encourage the sharing of ideas and opinions with other team members.
• Identify the signs of a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) following a total knee arthroplasty.
• Diagnose and create a care plan for a patient presenting with adhesive capsulitis.

Day 1 Post-op TKA
ID signs of DVT Hand-off to MD
Hand-off to PT Collaborate on care plan

Dx Adhesive Capsulitis

I would recommend this event to others
The learning experience was valuable
My teamwork/communication skills improved because of this experience

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

Figure 1. Case flow
Figure 2. Perception distribution