

ERO WG Relations between dental practitioners and universities

ERO Statement on interprofessional education and collaborative practice

The collaborative approach between all healthcare professionals has become an essential element of healthcare, and, having been discussed for decades, has become a trending topic. Interprofessional education occurs when students from two or more professions learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes (WHO, 2010).

ERO evaluated the current spread of knowledge about interprofessional education and collaborative practice and the status quo in ERO member countries.

The topic of interprofessional education and collaborative practice (IPE & CP) has been discussed amongst half of the corresponding 26 countries from levels of dental association to university, and/or government levels.

The main benefits of IPE & CP as defined by respondents are:

- Development of a truly holistic view of the patient
- Increase the awareness about the general health of patients among dental graduates
- Development of patient-centered approaches to healthcare
- Promotion of a teamwork approach to healthcare

Potential barriers to implementing IPE & CP in most countries are:

- Including the topic in the dental curriculum might increase the costs of education
- Lack of manpower
- Lack of interest from stakeholders
- Overlapping competencies and misunderstanding of tasks by different healthcare workers

Examples of the best practices of dentists' collaboration in the ERO area are with:

- gynecologists and midwives to address oral health issues during pregnancy
- endocrinologists in the management of diabetes control
- cardiologists in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases

Recommendation:

Based on the obtained evidence about the pros and cons of IPE&CP, we suggest the NDAs draw the attention of all possible stakeholders to this potential innovative method in the education of dental professionals, which enables them to provide patient care in a collaborative team environment.

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