Students perceptions of the nurse- and physician role in interprofessional teamwork

Background
Interprofessional teamwork in healthcare has gained increased recognition worldwide as a way of improving patient safety. Research underlines the effect of an interprofessional approach. These students are more likely to become efficient inter-professional team members. There is however; little knowledge about the extent to which students themselves perceives and understands the necessity of interprofessional teamwork.

The research question was:
What constitute nursing and medical students' perceptions (understanding, attitude, experience) of interprofessional teamwork as a part of their future professional roles?

Methodology
A descriptive design based on focus groups was adopted and data were analyzed by qualitative content analysis. The study included 22 participants, 12 medical – (fourth year) and 10 nursing students (third year).

Results
The analysis identified three themes related to students' perceptions of interprofessional teamwork: (1) the student role adopted through education, (2) the professional role awareness in clinical practice, (3) ward round as an arena for interprofessional teamwork.

The medical students described their future role as physicians as very clearly presented. The nursing students had a more vague understanding of their professional role and described their position in the interprofessional team as coordinators or “glue”. Teamwork was described as important. Both nursing students and medical students described the ward round as an important area of interprofessional teamwork and suggested interprofessional simulation as a way to improve. They did not know much about each other’s educational trajectories.

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