

Shared Culture of Caring in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Essence of Interprofessional Collaboration as Perceived by Pharmacy and Medical Technology/Medical Laboratory Science Students

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Background and Objectives: COVID-19 pandemic has affected an unimaginable number of lives. Healthcare providers have played an essential role in battling the pandemic with strategies which organised the healthcare system to reduce the current issues or challenges. This study sought to assess the perception, attitude, and perceived view of medical laboratory science and pharmacy students on interprofessional collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods: A 30-item questionnaire was distributed randomly using google forms, to the Third and Fourth-Year students taking either BS Pharmacy (BSP Pharm) or BS Medical Laboratory Science (BSMLS) at a private university in Northern Philippines. A total of 198 respondents returned the questionnaire. t-test and chi-square were used to compare the mean values of dependent and independent variables to determine their statistical relationship.

Results and Discussion: Interaction between BSP Pharm and BSMLS students was observed to be high ("Regularly"= 35.90%; "Quite a lot"= 18.70%; "Somewhat"= 35.90%; "Not at all"= 9.60%), but collaboration showed the opposite ("Regularly"= 27.60%; "Quite a lot"= 26.00%; "Somewhat"= 22.40%; "Not at all"= 24.00%). There is a lack of collaboration between student-professionals and student-medical technologists in general. Nevertheless, they understand the responsibilities of their own department and see interprofessional collaboration as an important factor in providing quality service in patient care.

Conclusion: The results showed that interprofessional education and collaborative experience are essential in enhancing students' patient-centeredness, teamwork and collaboration, especially in times of pandemic. Therefore, more effort should be made in interacting and collaborating with other student professionals.

Keywords: *Interprofessional, collaboration, pharmacy, medical technology, students, pandemic*