

# Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Experience of Working in an Interdisciplinary Team in Healthcare at the MOI Teaching and Referral Hospital, Intensive Care Unit

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**Abstract:-** In provision of healthcare, effective collaboration of healthcare staff of different cadres can have a positive impact on patient care as far as their safety is concerned. With increasing burden of diseases and complexity inpatient care, the need for interdisciplinary collaboration is on the rise. Gone are those days when a physician, pharmacist, nurse or any healthcare giver in whichever field of health would independently offer quality care that satisfies their patients. Healthcare has evolved enormously within the last two decades. With the evolution of health care and the world's quest for quality of patient care, there is a requirement for necessitating a parallel health care professional development with great concentration on patient-centered approach of interdisciplinary collaboration. This approach will help coming up with an effective team that will offer exemplary care to patients hence patients' satisfaction. Focusing on this goal, appraisal of interdisciplinary team should be upheld by skills and strategies for set objectives to be accomplished and overcome the setbacks that might hinder interdisciplinary collaboration.

**Keywords:-** *Effective Team; Continuous Professional Development (CPD); Interdisciplinary Collaboration; MOI Teaching And Referral Hospital (MTRH); Intensive Care Unit (ICU)*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In building an exemplary patient-centered care delivery, interdisciplinary team collaboration is considered as one of the success factors that must be reinforced in any healthcare delivery system.

There is need for interdisciplinary collaboration approach at every level of patient care, since this approach has proven to have positive impact on the patients' outcomes. The level of interdisciplinary collaboration that occurs among the healthcare practitioners can have a positive or negative impact on patient's outcome. According to Joint commission's current report, it has been noted that almost 70% of patients' adverse events are mainly related to poor communication and lack of collaboration as the major cause of the problem [6]. A rise in communication and

interdisciplinary team collaboration can have a positive impact to patient outcomes and healthcare giver satisfaction.

The aim of this paper is to explain the evolution, importance, values, principles, benefits, challenges and the practical tips which enhance interdisciplinary collaboration.

## II. DEFINITION

### ➤ *Interdisciplinary Team*

Interdisciplinary team is a group of people who come together with their distinguished characteristics and skills to work interdependently as well as dynamically towards achievement of a specific set common goal through accomplishment of specific allocated tasks within a specific time [2]. In MTRH, ICU embraces interdisciplinary collaboration which entails, Physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists, biomedical engineers, clinical counsellors, nutritionists, and cleaners. The team, work collaboratively with patient centered care delivery being the ultimate goal.

### ➤ *Effective Team*

Effective team is group of people comprising of the healthcare professionals, patients and their relatives who work and communicate together in all matters pertaining patients care through merging healthcare providers' expertise and knowledge as well as including patients' opinions and rights in decision making processes with an aim of providing quality patient care [2]. This aspect has enabled the MTRH ICU team to understand the practices of the ICU environment and its outcome on team dynamics and functioning.

### A. *Evolution of Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Delivery of Patient Care*

Healthcare system has undergone a lot of transformation, and has rapidly changed in the last two decades. There is increased complexity in the modern healthcare, this acts as a driving force for transition of healthcare givers from being solitary workers to members of the team who share a common goal [1]

More than 2,700 clinical practice guidelines has been listed by the U.S National Guideline clearing house, among which have been used annually leading to more conducting

and publishing of more than 25,000 new clinical trials [5]. There is no healthcare provider who can handle, absorb and use all the knowledge in various healthcare disciplines alone, in regards to that, each member is encouraged to specialize in their area of practice since there is increased need for specific knowledge in each discipline. We therefore have an obligation to strive towards perfection of science and practice of interdisciplinary collaboration in healthcare [1]. Each healthcare practitioner relies on sharing of knowledge and skills with other team members in order to provide diverse care. Moreover, without explicit acknowledgement and purposeful reinforcement of collaboration, preventable systemic errors and inefficiencies cannot be properly addressed [1].

#### *B. Values, Principles and Benefits of Interdisciplinary Collaboration in MTRH ICU*

The following values have proved to be very effective in promoting interdisciplinary collaboration in healthcare.

##### ➤ *Discipline:*

Discipline among MTRH ICU team has made them stick to their scope of practice as they seek ways to improve patient's health. Time management and respect among the team members as aspects of discipline has been upheld and proven to be very effective in promoting interdisciplinary collaboration.

##### ➤ *Honesty:*

There is high value that comes with proper communication within an interdisciplinary team. This includes transparency on the decisions, mistakes and goals of the team. Honesty as a virtue is crucial to continuous development and for maintenance of trust which is pre-condition for a high functioning interdisciplinary team [4]. Intensive care unit team in MTRH have embrace honesty as a virtue among the team, the centre of focus being patient care.

##### ➤ *Humility:*

MTRH ICU team have a culture whereby they do not believe in superiority of one discipline to the other. They recognize and value differences in training. The team members are human beings and they are prone to mistakes, therefore one of the principle of working in an interdisciplinary team is that, they can depend on each other to recognize and overcome setbacks regardless of team members' hierarchy.

##### ➤ *Curiosity:*

MTRH ICU has a dedicated team that reflects on the lessons and experiences acquired in their daily roles in the unit on patient care and use their reflective skills in continuous professional development. CPD has been valued a lot in ICU and all the team members involve in CPD twice a week. This approach has promoted interdisciplinary collaboration among members as well as improving patients care.

#### *C. Principles of Interdisciplinary Collaboration in MTRH ICU*

The following principles have been effective in promoting interdisciplinary collaboration in healthcare.

##### ➤ *Effective Communication:*

For there to be success in any organization, effective communication must be enforced. Effective communication in MTRH ICU team has been effective both vertical communication from the nurse manager and head of the ICU to the interdisciplinary team and horizontal communication among the interdisciplinary team. This principle has promoted interdisciplinary collaboration and it has enhanced optimum patient care delivery.

##### ➤ *Clear Roles:*

Each cadre in the interdisciplinary team has clear scope of practice for each other functions, responsibilities and accountabilities. This principle has been very efficient for the ICU team and it has made division of labour possible.

##### ➤ *Measurable Processes and Outcomes:*

Reliable and timely feedback on successes and failures should be agreed and implemented by the team. These are used to track and improve performance immediately and put strategies for the future. [3] Measurable processes and outcomes have been upheld by different cadres in the interdisciplinary team and this has proven to have positive impact in patient care delivery.

##### ➤ *Leadership:*

Effective interdisciplinary team leaders ensures there is proper coordination and facilitation of activities among members of the interdisciplinary team. Good leadership plays a key role in interdisciplinary collaboration. This kind of leadership is evident in ICU right from the ICU manager, in charges, clinical nurse educator in charge of ICU as it trickles down. The good leadership has enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration inpatient care.

#### *D. Benefits of Interdisciplinary Team Collaboration in Patient Care*

Interdisciplinary collaboration inpatient care has reduced the cost and time of hospitalization. It has also improve coordination of care hence patient and healthcare provider satisfaction. With interdisciplinary collaboration, there has been accessibility to healthcare services, improved communication and professional diversity which has improved outcome of patients' health and quality of care.

#### *E. Challenges to Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Patient Care*

There are very many barriers that exist in developing and maintaining interdisciplinary collaboration inpatient care [2].

➤ *Changing Roles:*

Many interdisciplinary teams, experience confusion of roles and responsibilities. This changing roles can pose great challenge to the team members in matters regarding allocation of roles and acknowledgement.

➤ *Individualistic Nature of Health Care:*

Various cadres in the field of health such as medicine, nursing and pharmacy have autonomy. They are based on the traditional culture of one to one relationship between the healthcare giver and the patient. This relationship still remains an important aspect. However, it is challenged with the concept of interdisciplinary collaboration inpatient care.

➤ *Health-Care Hierarchies:*

Hierarchical structure in healthcare can be counter-productive inpatient care in an operational interdisciplinary teams where all the members' view are not considered due to their level of hierarchy.

*F. Practical Tips Which Enhance Interdisciplinary Collaboration among Healthcare Professionals*

- Introduction of healthcare givers to the team and clarification of their role and scope of practice.
- Ask questions, check and clarify and if you are not sure of something, always consult with the members of interdisciplinary team.
- Before beginning a procedure, remember to brief the team members and debrief after the procedure.
- Learn to use peoples name and be assertive when required.
- During conflict resolution, always remember to focus on “what” is right for the patient and not “who” is right/wrong.

*G. How Interdisciplinary Collaboration Can Ensure Patient Satisfaction*

Patient satisfaction is a very vital indicator in a successful interdisciplinary collaboration which focuses on patient care delivery. To ensure patient satisfaction, healthcare interdisciplinary team has to ensure the following [4]:

- Identify themselves to the patients, their role and the composition of the team members.
- Informing the patients on their care plan of the day and what they expect.
- Encouraging patients to communicate on ways in which they are fairing on in pain management.
- Involve patients in your activities, inform them of the procedures you are doing even the simple ones like taking vital signs or adjusting IV lines. Communication plays a very important role in patient satisfaction and their confidence in asking questions.

### III. CONCLUSION

The zeal of delivering quality services to patients is subjective to good performance. This can be achieved through effective interdisciplinary collaboration. It is our mandate to reduce the gap between old and new practices required for interdisciplinary collaboration. Therefore, healthcare organizations should always strive to adopt interdisciplinary collaboration in healthcare.

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