

## Original Article

# Interprofessional Research: A Concept Analysis

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Combining expertise from different disciplines can provide a more holistic understanding of complex issues and can lead to the development of new and effective interventions for improving healthcare outcomes.

**Aim:** This concept analysis aims to give clarity to the concept of interprofessional research in the healthcare industry by presenting the attributes, antecedents, and consequences of interprofessional research and discussing related terms and model cases.

**Methodology:** The concept analysis was employed for searching the term Interprofessional Research. The Walker & Avant method was used.

**Results:** Interprofessional research is a collaborative research process that involves scholars from two or more different disciplines systematically integrate their expertise, techniques, methods, and perspectives in order to answer challenging issues, generate novel insights, and advance our comprehension of phenomena or outcomes relevant to patient care, healthcare systems, or deeper issues facing society.

**Conclusion:** Interprofessional Research can assist advance the field and revolutionize the healthcare system by giving an improved perspective of complicated challenges than single-disciplinary research.

**Keywords:** Concept Analysis, Interprofessional Research, Healthcare outcomes

### Introduction

Imagine a future wherein different healthcare professionals (physicians, nurses, pharmacist, social workers, engineers, and even data scientists) collaborate with one another to tackle complicated issues using their combined knowledge and skills. This is the core of interprofessional research (IPR).

IPR is far more than simply integrating diverse disciplines and hoping for an extraordinary result. It's a discussion of synergy, teamwork, and the value of different viewpoints. It's about realizing that when we collaborate to solve the complex issues of healthcare, public health, and beyond, everything is greater than the parts. Combining knowledge from other disciplines

can give a more comprehensive understanding of difficult challenges, resulting in the creation of novel and effective strategies for improving healthcare outcomes.

Interprofessional refers to a collaboration amongst individuals from multiple different professions (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In research, it refers to individuals from different disciplines collaborating with one another on a shared project (Green, et al., 2015). While, research refers to the systematic investigation of a phenomenon to increase our understanding of it (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Therefore, interprofessional research (IPR) is a type of research that involves collaboration between researchers from different disciplines.

Collaboration may take in different forms, such as,

- (1) jointly designing and conducting research studies,
- (2) sharing data and expertise,
- (3) analyzing research findings from different perspectives, and
- (4) developing and implementing interventions based on research findings.

### **Related Concepts**

Several concepts are closely related to interprofessional research and share some defining attributes. Here are a few key ones:

#### ***Interprofessional Education (IPE)***

IPE is similar to IPR in that it is a collaboration of multiple professions, but it concentrates on learning and training rather than research. IPE's distinguishing characteristics include shared learning activities, the development of interprofessional competencies, and collaboration abilities (Van Diggele, et al., 2020).

#### ***Interprofessional Collaboration (IPC)***

IPC and IPR both involve individuals across several disciplines working together in pursuit of a shared objective that is not necessarily involved with research. However, IPC focuses on collaborative decision-making, collaborative interventions, communication, and coordination among those with expertise (Reeves, et al. 2017).

#### ***Transdisciplinary Research (TR)***

TR and IPR use knowledge and techniques from different disciplines to address complicated challenges. TR has distinctive features such as a shared research issue, the integration of ideas and techniques, and the focus on new knowledge generation (Wickson, 2006).

#### ***Team Science (TS)***

TS is similar to IPR in that it deals with collaborative research by teams consisting of different experiences. TS emphasizes shared leadership, multidisciplinary communication, a concentration on synergy, and integration (Stokols, et al., 2008).

### **Collaboration**

It is similar to IPR in that it emphasizes collaboration and coordination of effort towards a common objective. However, cooperation has its distinguishing characteristics, such as: shared responsibility, communication, dispute resolution, trust and respect (San Martin-Rodriguez, et al., 2005; Morley and Cashell, 2017).

### **Attributes of Interprofessional Research**

In addition to the characteristics previously mentioned, certain features that further distinguish interprofessional research, is a research-oriented partnership that prioritizes methodical inquiry, data collecting, analysis, and knowledge development. It is an explicit interprofessional design, involving researchers representing several fields actively involved in every phase of the research process. IPR has shared goals and outcomes, with a decision on the research topic, aims, and anticipated outcomes of the study. It is also a disciplinary integration that focuses on mixing and synthesizing information, theories, and approaches from several disciplines. IPR also promotes mutual respect and communication, focusing on collaborative workplaces in which all disciplines are recognized and heard. These features are distinct interprofessional research from other comparable concepts, emphasizing its distinct contribution to knowledge production and problem resolution across disciplines (Lutfiyya et al., 2016).

### **Antecedents**

#### ***Complex issues***

In the healthcare industry, interprofessional cooperation is now crucial to provide high-quality treatment at lower costs and with better results. To meet the requirements of patients, patient-centered care necessitates the integration of all aspects of primary and specialist medicine. To achieve improved health outcomes, this strategy is even more important for those with chronic illnesses. Research has indicated a correlation between systemic disease in terms of the onset and course of the disease (Little et al., 2017, Southerland, et al., 2016, Lutfiyya et al., 2016).

### ***Demand for patient-centered care***

One of the aims of healthcare is improving the patient experience. It has been said that the idea of patient-centered care (PCC) is vague, which results in inconsistent application and implementation of this care approach. It is critical for quality improvement to comprehend patient experiences and views of healthcare interactions (Sidani, et al., 2013; Davidson, et al., 2022).

### ***Professional education trends***

Though it can certainly be challenging, collaboration amongst different disciplines is important. Collaboration can be enhanced through interprofessional education (IPE). The behaviors, capabilities, and performance of interprofessionals can all be enhanced by IPE. Perhaps even more significant than the educational content is the fact that a program like this foster professional networking and understanding of one another's perspectives. Rise of interprofessional education programs fostering collaboration and communication skills among different practitioners (Lutfiyya et al., 2016, Robben, 2012).

### ***Funding incentives***

Primary care providers increasingly rely on different disciplines to provide care. Funding organizations work to increase the utilization of collaborative teams of professionals in primary care delivery. Funding organizations work hard to create financial arrangements which encourage provider collaboration. Multifaceted efforts have received more funding from research organizations, which recognize their ability to generate innovation and have a positive impact on the financial conditions that facilitate provider collaboration. recognizing the potential for innovation and impact of multidisciplinary initiatives and increasing funding for them from research bodies (Wranik, et al., 2017).

### ***Evidence-based practice***

The growing number of research is showing how collaboration between professionals may enhance the quality and efficiency of healthcare. Developing strategies to continue the interprofessional research that has already begun is crucial, as is planning the study to take

significant lessons from the management and response to outbreaks of disease (Didegah & Thelwall, 2013, Green & Johnson, 2015, Nomaler, Frenken & Heimeriks, 2013, Resnick, 2011, Sy, et al., 2020).

### ***Consequences***

#### ***Enhanced knowledge creation***

Combining various points of view brings about novel insights and greater understanding of complicated processes. Collaborative work among professionals in healthcare settings is essential in order for knowledge translation and dissemination. Enhancing the knowledge and abilities of rehabilitation practitioners toward interprofessional collaboration it is also critical, (Careau, et al., 2014).

#### ***Improved service delivery***

A distinctive and essential approach to addressing the social determinants of health is care coordination across the health care and social service sectors; however, very little has been learned about how care coordination functions in this kind of environment. Development of collaborative treatment pathways and more effective therapies that benefit both care teams and patients, is warranted (Albertson, et al., 2022).

#### ***Interprofessional competency development***

Researchers develop collaboratively working abilities which may improve practice-level teamwork. The views of interprofessional socialization and collaboration among individuals is positively influenced by collaboration amongst professionals in a clinical context. This could possibly result in enhanced interprofessional cooperation in their future professional endeavors (Mink, 2021).

#### ***Policy and practice change***

The significance of taking evidence-based policy decisions in the field of health is obvious, but also understanding their complexity and limits that are supported by research is obvious. Evidence-based policy is still essential for enhancing public health despite any obstacles. Findings from research impact healthcare systems and service delivery by leading evidence-based interventions and decisions about policy (Chhetri et al., 2021,

Moutselos & Maglogiannis, 2020, Shafaghat et al., 2022).

### **Professional identity shift**

There is more complexity and depth in terms of student and clinician identities within interprofessional environments, even if some of the identities are consistent with earlier profession focused studies. Teachers could include identities curriculum into the workplace education programs already in place for clinicians and students to assist them in understanding how their interprofessional and professional identities are evolving. To encourage interprofessional learning and cooperation, workplace educators should arrange relevant interprofessional clinician-student encounters (Rees et al, 2019).

### **Proposed Definition**

Interprofessional research is a collaborative research process that involves scholars from two or more different disciplines systematically integrate their expertise, techniques, methods, and perspectives in order to answer challenging issues, generate novel insights, and advance our comprehension of phenomena or outcomes relevant to patient care, healthcare systems, or deeper issues facing society.

### **Model Case: Superb Teamwork**

A team of researchers agrees to collaborate to design and conduct an intervention that aims to improve glucose control, healthier eating habits, medication adherence, and social support and creates individualized treatments to cover all elements of diabetes care. The team of researchers from medicine, nutrition, pharmacy, and social work ensures that each discipline contributes their knowledge. Group dietary education sessions conducted by nutritionists and pharmacist-led medication courses are combined with medical consultations, and social worker help for addressing social determinants of health. Frequent team meetings encourage explicit communication, collaborative decision-making, and respect for the skills and knowledge of each profession.

The intervention promotes adherence to treatments, promotes nutritious food choices,

cultivates participants' social support network, and significantly improves glucose management. The project enhances communication and collaboration among healthcare providers, resulting in more patient-centered treatment and better outcomes for individuals living with diabetes.

### **Related Case: Better TWogether**

While doctors and nurses work together to create the training program, one researcher typically conducts the study for each discipline. The goal of both professions is to improve the accuracy of medication reconciliation, albeit their approaches to research and data analysis may be slightly different. The educational intervention is created in conjunction with physicians and nurses; nevertheless, knowledge integration could be restricted at the research stage. Medication errors are reduced and patient safety is raised when doctors and nurses use the training method to increase medication reconciliation accuracy.

The study highlights how important interprofessional cooperation is to enhancing patient care and medication safety. The cooperation encourages better practices and information sharing, which supports some areas of interprofessional research even though it is not fully integrated.

### **Contrary Case: The Soloist**

Without considering potential insights from other disciplines like nursing, infection control, and environmental services, a researcher conducts the study on their own. The study ignores the complex interactions amongst variables that lead to hospital-acquired infections and instead concentrates solely on calculating infection rates. Boundaries between disciplines: The researcher does not look at how interprofessional collaboration might affect infection prevention and control.

Although data on infection rates were gathered, opportunities to identify systemic issues and create comprehensive treatment plans were lost in the process. As a result of the absence of a thorough, multidisciplinary approach, our understanding of the several factors that contribute to hospital-acquired illnesses is limited.

**Conclusion:** Interprofessional Research can assist advance the field and revolutionize the healthcare system by giving an improved perspective of complicated challenges than single-disciplinary research. It strengthens interaction and cooperation among healthcare professionals, resulting in more patient-centered care and excellent healthcare outcomes. IPR is not simply combining disciplines to do research but it emphasizes synergy and shared goals, ultimately promoting patient-centered care and a collaborative future for healthcare.

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