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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Student's experiences of interprofessional education during fieldwork practice in community (PKL Desa Terpadu) at Poltekkes Kemenkes Maluku: A qualitative study[☆]



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Abstract

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Objective: The study aimed to explore the student's experiences of the application of inter-professional education during *PKL Desa Terpadu*.

Methods: This study applied a qualitative method and used a semi-structured interview which involved 13 students from five study programmes (nutritionists, health analysts, nursing, environmental health, and midwifery) in Poltekkes Kemenkes Maluku.

Results: Three overarching themes are evident: *PKL Desa Terpadu* preparation activities; application of IPE in the *PKL Desa Terpadu*; and evaluation of *PKL Desa Terpadu* activities.

Conclusion: This study provides valuable insight regarding student's experiences for inter-professional education. These results indicate that *PKL Desa Terpadu* is useful as a learning environment, and there are opportunities to embed interprofessional education within the institutional curriculum to help students effectively learn and work together as an interprofessional team.

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Introduction

The development of science and technology has changed the priority of health and education service practices. This change requires some key competencies from health professionals, such as critical thinking, effective communication, teamwork, and collaboration between professions.¹ This competency can be achieved if interprofessional education begins when students are still in college.² Interprofessional education (IPE) promotes students from two or more professions to learn and work together to have effective collaboration and improve health outcomes.²⁻⁵

IPE has been developed in Indonesia since 2010, it can be seen from a number of studies reports about IPE learning models, such as Community-based Interprofessional Collaboration (COMIC) at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Interprofessional Education in Clinical Education (IPE-PK), and Community and Family Health Care-Interprofessional Education (CFHC-IPE) in FK UGM.⁵

The Poltekkes Kemenkes Maluku also initiated an IPE-based programme through the fieldwork practice in community or *Praktek Kerja Lapangan (PKL) Desa Terpadu* which was began in 2016.⁶ *PKL Desa Terpadu* is a learning model, in which the students from different professions work in inter-professional teams, while under supervision of facilitators to manage the care of the community. The involved students are from nutritionists, health analysts, nursing, environmental health, and midwifery. This learning aims to enhance collaboration practice.⁶ This study aims to explore student experience in implementing IPE during fieldwork practice in community at the Poltekkes Kemenkes Maluku. The result of the study can be used to re-assess, develop, revise, or improve IPE learning.^{5,7,8}

Methods

This study applied a qualitative method and used a semi-structured interview which involved 13 students from five study programmes (nutritionist, health analyst, nursing, environmental health, and midwifery). Purposive sampling was used and to maintain the confidentiality of participants, names and initials are used in this study. The study was conducted after obtaining Ethical Approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee of Faculty of Medicine Universitas Hasanuddin (No. 470/4.6.4.5.31/PP36/2019). Data collection was conducted from July to August 2019. Before the interview, participants were given inform consent and explanation about this study, and they can withdraw at any time. There was no psychological effect of this study to participants as information gathered was no privacy and only ask their experience of IPE. This interview was conducted in Bahasa (Indonesian Language), and the data analysis result was translated into English. Data analysis used an inductive thematic analysis. The obtained data then transcribed in verbatim transcripts, repeatedly read by researchers, and reduced by determining the meaning of units, coding, sub-themes and drawing conclusions of the themes. Word by word quotations to describe sub-themes and themes were taken directly from the transcript, while the Nvivo 10 For Windows Software was used to manage, organize, and determine the vital information from these data.^{9,10}

Table 1 Themes.

| Main themes | Sub-themes |
|--|--|
| <i>PKL Desa Terpadu</i> preparation activities | a. Preparation activities |
| Implementation of IPE in the <i>PKL Desa Terpadu</i> | a. Positive experiences b. Negative experiences c. Benefit of IPE |
| Evaluation of <i>PKL Desa Terpadu</i> activities | a. Student's perception b. Attitude towards other professions c. Interprofessional collaboration |

Results

The results show that there are three main themes that consisted of several sub-themes revealed to describe student's experiences of interprofessional learning during *PKL Desa Terpadu*, as shown in Table 1. The result gained through the interview shows that this activity created some opportunities for students to learn and work together with other professions to improve collaboration.

Theme 1: *PKL Desa terpadu* preparation activities

One step taken by Poltekkes Kemenkes Maluku was to prepare students before interprofessional learning through preparation activities, where during the last two days students were given material about IPE using presentation, discussion, and simulation. This preparation activity also involved lecturers and instructors as facilitators in *PKL Desa Terpadu*. Through this activity, participants felt motivated to be involved in interprofessional learning. This activity could also reduce student's domination and selfishness, so they were ready to work in a team and to solve health problems in the community. It was mentioned by the participant as below:

When preparation activities conducted, we were increasingly interested in how to collaborate communicating and work together with other study programs to solve problems (G2/A).

Theme 2: Implementation of IPE in the *PKL Desa Terpadu*

There are three sub-themes emerged from this study for the second theme including positive experiences, negative experiences and benefit of IPE based on students' experience. During the *PKL Desa Terpadu* implementation, participants often experienced learning with their peers from other professional. In the *PKL Desa Terpadu*, they had an opportunity to learn about other study programmes and compare the health care approaches from each health-care profession students. Some participants stated that they gained various positive experiences and new knowledge when involved in IPE, as conveyed by one of the informants below:

During having the PKL Desa Terpadu... I got very positive experiences... even with other professions. We shared and helped one another, worked together, and not were picky to only prefer profession A or B, but we worked very well together (P1/A).

Unfortunately, some participants experienced negative experiences during involvement in IPE, such as to feel shy (P3/E), less confident (S2/Z), selfish, and dominant (P4/L, B2/I, A2/O), as stated by the following participant:

At first, it was hard ... it was hard to study with other students from many study programs like this, some students surely want to be superior among others (A2/O).

However, students also gained some benefits through the IPE approach in PKL *Desa Terpadu* activities. The students had the opportunity to socialize, learn, and work together to solve health problems in the community as evidenced by participant quotes:

I think this experience will help us later in the future when we should work either in hospitals, health centres, or in any job. For example us as nutritionists, if we work in industry ... people there are not only nutritionists, but also other professions from engineering and others, here I learnt that I could collaborate with the team, maintained good communication, and respected the opinions of other professions (G1/P).

Theme 3: Evaluation of PKL *Desa Terpadu* Activities

This last theme derived from three sub-themes which are student's perception regarding the implementation of IPE, attitude towards other profession and implementation of interprofessional education in the PKL *Desa Terpadu* activities.

Poltekkes Kemenkes Maluku used a team-based learning method for the application of IPE called PKL *Desa Terpadu*. In this activity, students were divided into small groups, consisted of five study programmes (one team-one student) that conducted team-based health services. Through this approach, every student from each profession was encouraged to play an active role, think critically, communicate and cooperate with other team members, so they could solve community health problems. Based on the experiences and benefits gained by all participants, they stated that IPE was critical in developing their abilities in working with other professions as the following statement:

I thought IPE was crucial and useful because if we only worked in one area, it was not effective. But if we work together, we could solve problems quickly, especially health problems that required collaboration with other professions (A2/O).

Participants also reported that they could behave better towards other professions, such as more open towards other, mutual assistance, effective communication, respect and understanding the role of other professions:

We learned professional ethics, so there were limits that could not be broken, so health workers must do intervention in accordance to their professions. That was why there must be other professions to help, overcome, or solve problems (A1/M).

Participants also practiced a team approach in the PKL *Desa Terpadu*. They tried to undertake patients and family assessments together. After assessing a patient or family, students would discuss their findings and come to an agreement about the intervention. They felt that had learned

much through collaboration. Good communication and collaborative decision-making were a strength of teamwork, which was believed to help prevent time delay and improve health care. This is supported by a statement from one of the participants:

We could collaborate with friends from other professions like nutritionists, nurses, midwives, and analysts. We did the assessment together and we realize that in every data collection every profession has their own part, so yeah...we should do this together (S1/N).

Discussion

A study in 2018 reveals that preparation activities in health-care professionals ready for interprofessional work had an important role in increasing the efficacy and quality of services to community.¹¹ At the same time, the study showed that by attending preparation activities together with other study programmes, participants realized the importance of collaboration in health care. They are motivated and ready to take part in interprofessional learning as an effort to develop communication skills and understanding of the role and responsibility of other professions.¹²⁻¹⁴ However, the implementation of preparation activities has several barriers such as lack of classroom, audiovisual, and schedule of activities. It is important for the Poltekkes Kemenkes Maluku to overcome these barriers so that the application of IPE can be done.¹⁵

This is the first IPE experience for all participants. Some of them expressed negative feelings such as to feel shy, unconfident, selfish, and dominant and not felt welcomed by some of the other study programmes. This poor experiences within the multidisciplinary team can also reinforce negative beliefs about the value of other professionals when performing community care.¹⁶ But most of the participants were positive about IPE reported board range opportunities, activities, and benefits during the implementation of IPE in the PKL *Desa Terpadu*. Apart from classroom activities, PKL *Desa Terpadu* provides an ideal setting for promoting IPE by given the students concurrently situated and an opportunity to learn and work collaboratively.

Every student from each profession is encouraged to be active, critically, able to communicate and cooperate with other team members. During these activities, students to be part of the multidisciplinary team and will experience role modelling and socialization.¹¹ Facilitators provided positive role-modelling by demonstrating the value of IPE in the clinical setting. The interprofessional socialization allows participants to observe, interact and understanding the roles of other professions.¹¹ The interprofessional experience enabled participants to assess needs and prioritize activities, creating an opportunity to learn about other professions and compare alternative community care approaches¹¹ by interprofessional team meetings, discussion and presentation. From this study, we can see that interactive IPE in PKL *Desa Terpadu* has the potential for improving interprofessional attitudes, collaboration skills and collaborative behaviours.¹

As a previous study before, the IPE approach in community-health service in Indonesia is significantly satisfying, with 95.16% of respondents stated that interpro-

professional learning should be continued.¹ Our IPE programme in the *PKL Desa Terpadu* resulted in improvements in participant's attitudes towards other professions and collaboration skills from all disciplines: nutritionists, health analysts, nursing, environmental health, and midwifery students.¹² Most participants reported that they had an opportunity to interact and practise different skills in this interprofessional placement.¹⁶ The interprofessional placement of students and facilitators in the same location during *PKL Desa Terpadu* made the supervision process become active, so the students could interact and learn from and with other disciplines, so they became more confident, understood the roles and tasks of other professions, respected each other, enabled to communicate with other professions and ready to collaborate with them.^{1,16}

Although supervision is vital, probably the least investigated, discussed and developed. Therefore, the current IPE programme in Poltekkes Kemenkes Maluku should investigate the important components of supervision such as facilitators ratio and relationship, feedback response and time or attention allocated to students.¹⁶ It is challenging to organize and implement a successful IPE programme among multiple professions, but it is possible with plenty of efforts and resources like support from leadership, stakeholder, lecturer, instructors, students, administration, investment of human resources through training and cost.^{6,13} These findings provided information that can be used to improve our understanding of the benefit of IPE for students by highlighting what was working and what needed further modification.

Conclusion

This study provides valuable information regarding student's experiences for IPE. These results indicate that *PKL Desa Terpadu* is useful as a learning environment where students can learn together, with and from other professions, and there are opportunities to embed IPE within the institutional curriculum to help students effectively learn and work together as an interprofessional team.

3 Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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