

ABSTRACT

Do oral health therapists need to collaborate?

Melody Martin

Keywords: Education Development; Educators; Hermeneutic Phenomenology; Improved Health Outcomes; Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice; Oral Health Therapy

It is imperative oral health therapists (OHTs) collaborate with peers from other disciplines. Interprofessional collaboration contributes to improved health outcomes, improvements in health systems, and increased patient and practitioner satisfaction (World Health Organisation, 2010). The legislation provides a clear mandate for interprofessional collaboration. The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (2019) clause 118 states professional regulatory authorities have a responsibility to promote collaboration across, and between health professionals in the delivery of health services. The World Health Organization (2010) explains that embedding interprofessional education (IPE) enables health graduates to develop the capability necessary to practice confidently as interprofessional collaborative practitioners. Despite these factors, IPE is not immersed within the AUT OHT curriculum. To inform and guide sustainable change in line with the evidence and legislative requirements, this study uses a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology to draw on AUT OHT educators lived experiences of interprofessional education and collaborative practice (IPECP), and applies an interpretative lens to understanding these experiences, informed by van Manen (1990). The findings from the research will provide insights that aim to inform future IPECP curriculum development. Taking an informed approach to developing IPE for AUT OHT students, it aims to prepare collaborative and practice-ready graduates, and ultimately improve the health outcomes of those they serve. In this presentation, I will highlight the importance of IPECP for OHT at AUT, share some of the stories told during the semi-structured interviews with AUT OHT educators on their lived experiences of IPECP and summarise my research to date.

References

Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Amendment Act 2019.

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience*. Althouse Press.

World Health Organization. (2010). *Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education & Collaborative Practice*.

https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/70185/WHO_HRH_HPN_10.3_eng.pdf;jsessionid=EE8ADEA2CCFD04A9C319626337F97E53?sequence=1