

BSc Social Work and Sports Science students knowledge of and attitude towards inter-professional collaboration and (prevention of malnutrition in) older adults: part of the VITALIS project.



Introduction and aim

Given its multifactorial nature, preventing malnutrition in older adults requires a transdisciplinary approach. The VITALIS-study aims for an improvement in the attitude, knowledge, and skills of Bachelor's students regarding its integral prevention.

This substudy aimed to improve the knowledge and attitude of Sports Science and Social Work students of InHolland University of Applied Sciences in Haarlem (NL).

Methods

Students were offered a four-hour educational course. Older adults from daycare Kennemerhart (Haarlem, NL) participated by exchanging nutritional habits with the students and boxing with them.

Before and after the course, students completed a questionnaire built on the Extended Professional Identity Scale (Reinders et al., 2020) and Kogan's Attitude toward Old People scale (Ortiz-Rubio et al., 2020). Specific questions about malnutrition were added. Answer possibilities ranged from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to agree strongly). Paired data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed rank test and presented as means.

Results

91 students followed one of the three identical courses, of whom 39 completed the questionnaire before and after the course. Characteristics of this group are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Students' characteristics.

	Number of students
Study	
• Social work (2nd year)	10
• Sports science (3rd year)	29
Age	
• 18 - 19	14
• 20 - 21	17
• 22 - 23	7
• 24 - 25	1
Gender	
• Male	18
• Female	21

Changes in students' knowledge of and attitude towards interprofessional collaboration are presented in Table 2. In addition, after the course, students were more looking forward to an internship with older adults (before 2.7 vs after 3.0; $p=0.039$), and they gained knowledge on how to recognize malnutrition in older adults (3.3 vs 3.9, $p=0.003$).

Table 2: Before and after scores on interprofessional collaboration.

Question	Before	After	P-value
I know what interprofessional learning and working mean	3.2	4.0	<0.001
I enjoy learning about other professions in healthcare and the social domain	3.7	3.7	0.894
I enjoy meeting and getting to know people from other professions in healthcare and the social domain	3.8	3.8	1.000
I find it important to learn how to collaborate with professionals from other fields in healthcare and the social domain	3.9	3.8	0.417
I see myself preferably working in an interprofessional team in the future	3.2	3.5	0.015
All members of an interprofessional team should be involved in setting treatment goals for clients	3.6	3.7	0.503
In an interprofessional team, I sometimes need to take a step back to achieve the best outcome for the client	3.7	3.7	0.600
I know what my role within a team would be in the prevention of malnutrition in older adults	3.0	3.8	<0.001

Discussion and conclusion

In conclusion, interprofessional education for BSc students improved their knowledge of and attitude towards interprofessional collaboration and (preventing malnutrition in) older adults. Investing in interprofessional education is worthwhile since it connects to current professional profiles and societal agreements.

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