

National Center for Integrative Primary Healthcare: Designing an Introductory Interprofessional Integrative Health Course for Primary Care Educational Training Programs

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Abstract

Introduction: The University of Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine was funded to establish the National Center for Integrative Primary Healthcare (NCIPH). NCIPH supports the incorporation of competency- and evidence-based Integrative Healthcare (IH) curricula into educational programs. One goal is designing a 45-hour IH online course for the entire interprofessional spectrum of primary care trainees.

Methods: Curriculum development included developing Integrative Primary Healthcare meta-competencies and a needs assessment survey. Experts representing primary care residency programs, nursing, public health, pharmacy, behavioral health, and complementary and integrative health professions developed meta-competencies. Educational programs completed a survey assessing interest, curriculum priorities and barriers.

Results: Ten meta-competencies were identified: patient-centered care, integrative health history, collaborative treatment planning, utilizing evidence-based integrative treatments, knowledge of integrative and conventional professions, facilitating behavior change, working interprofessionally, self-care, incorporating integrative healthcare across settings, and ethical standards. Respondents (N=420) from complementary and integrative health (40%), primary care residencies (26%), nursing (9%), pharmacy (9%), and other professions completed the survey. 90% felt it was important to offer IH content. 57% offered IH content, but only 21% felt it was sufficient. Time constraints, budget, and faculty expertise were the top barriers. Highest rated content included nutrition/diet, patient-provider communication, behavior change, patient-centered care, physical activity and lifestyle counseling. All IH competencies were rated important. 44% wished to pilot the course.

Discussion/Conclusion: The project's ultimate goal is incorporating an emphasis on integrative interprofessional patient care within primary care education. Survey results demonstrated substantial interest and need. The meta-competencies and needs assessment provided the course foundation.

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