Large-scale online education and change in behaviour and practice of health and social care professionals

A systematic review

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with Dr Elaine Lee, Laura L. Underwood, Prof. Mary J. Renfrew, Dr Nicola M. Gray
we examined

whether and how large-scale online courses impact on change of behaviour and practice of health and social care professionals
qualitative
small number of participants (7-28)
questionnaires, interviews, discussion forums, focus groups
Scotland
nursing managers [2]

Canada
pharmacists [3]

Scotland
nurses [1]

Finland
nursing managers [2]

Australia
students and clinical supervisors [4]
radiation therapists [5]
mental health clinicians [6]

Numbers in brackets refer to included studies – see reference list
Did the courses effect behaviour and practice change?

**outcomes**

changes in
Did the courses effect behaviour and practice change?

- outcomes
- awareness
  - 4 studies
- changes in
Did the courses effect behaviour and practice change?

Outcomes: Changes in

- Awareness: 4 studies
- Attitudes: 3 studies
Did the courses effect behaviour and practice change?

Outcomes:
- Awareness: 4 studies
- Attitudes: 3 studies
- Communication: 3 studies
Did the courses effect behaviour and practice change?

outcomes changes in

awareness 4 studies
attitudes 3 studies
communication 3 studies
confidence 4 studies
Did the courses effect behaviour and practice change?

- **Outcomes changes in**
  - Awareness: 4 studies
  - Attitudes: 3 studies
  - Communication: 3 studies
  - Confidence: 4 studies
  - Practice: 6 studies
Change in practice or expectation of changes [4]

6 studies

- Accepting responsibility for outcomes [3] and taking on a more proactive role with increased clinical responsibilities [5]
- Engagement in reflective practice [5]
- Adopting evidence-based approaches to inform clinical decisions [3,5]
- E.g. more humane treatment of patients in psychiatric hospitals: reduction of physical restraints, more outdoor activities, involving patients in decision making [2]

Numbers in brackets refer to included studies – see reference list
What contributed to positive findings?

- Stimulating **deeper thinking through self-reflection exercises** -> taking responsibility for driving own personal learning [1,2]

- Elements of **storytelling** -> enhanced enjoyment and emotional involvement in the course [4]

- **Discussion forums** and **activities focused on evidence-based practice** -> enhanced confidence, readiness for more critical reflection – new perspectives can unfold [5]

- **Supportive work environment:** sharing experience with peers, **practicality of the concepts learned**, opportunities to reflect, practice-at-work activities [3]

Numbers in brackets refer to included studies – see reference list
large-scale online education may have the potential to contribute to behaviour change of health and social care professionals and, consequently, to change of practice.
...online learning can “bring about empowerment, transformative learning and reflection outcomes that go beyond just mere acquisition of clinical knowledge online”...

Sim & Radloff 2008 [5], p.12
Limitations

- Small numbers of participants
- Qualitative studies only
- Outcomes not well defined
- Methods not consistent

...and more questions!...
Papers included in this review


This review

Thank you!

get in touch

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image by sea turtle: https://www.flickr.com/photos/sea-turtle/3920818927/