

A Systematic Review on the Impact of Mentoring of Allied Health Professionals on Patient Care

Joseph Cobbledick¹, Katherine Lawler², Alisha da Silva¹, Browen McBain², David Snowdon²

¹Royal Melbourne Hospital, Parkville, Australia,

²School of Allied Health, Human Services and Sport, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia

 Joseph.cobbledick@mh.org.au

Background

There are various support mechanisms for therapy Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) to improve their practice such as clinical supervision, educational workshops, audits and feedback.

Mentoring involves an experienced person (mentor) supporting another person (mentee) to develop skills and knowledge for their professional development.

However, no systematic review has evaluated the impact of mentoring on patient care.

Aim

To investigate the effect of mentoring of AHPs on the quality of patient care (patient health outcomes, process of care, safety outcomes and experience of care).

Methods

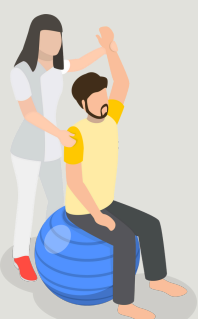
Databases (MEDLINE, PsycINFO, CINAHL, EMBASE) were searched from earliest date available to 10th September 2024 for English language studies investigating the effect of clinical practice mentoring of therapy AHPs on quality of patient care.

Studies were ineligible if they investigated students, did not have a comparison, mentoring did not address clinical practice, investigation was only of other models of support (eg supervision) or only included self-reported measures.

Two reviewers independently applied selection criteria and rated study quality using the Medical Education Research Study Quality Instrument (MERSQI).

Data was extracted on the quality of patient care. Results were analysed using a descriptive synthesis.

Results



3 Physiotherapy (PT) studies



2 Occupational Therapy (OT) studies



2 PT and OT studies

In all studies mentors observed the clinical practice of mentees, a positive impact on patient outcomes was found.

Patient Outcomes



Five studies, including two randomised controlled trials, reported findings related to patient outcomes.^{2,3,4,6,7} A study involving 1,042 patients attending musculoskeletal outpatient PT provided evidence that mentoring improves patient health outcomes including disability and health-related quality of life.

Process of Care

Three pre/post studies measured process of care outcomes^{1,5,6}. One study of 25 PTs/OTs found mentoring enhanced self-reported paediatric care processes (provision of information, communication and respect). A further study found no increase in virtual reality use following or after mentoring of PTs/OTs



Patient Experience



Two studies reviewed patient experience^{4,7} however there was no evidence that mentoring improves patient experience.

Patient Safety

No studies included patient safety measures

Conclusion

There is preliminary evidence that mentoring of PTs and OTs may improve patient care, particularly patient health outcomes and process of care. There is a paucity of original research conducted on mentoring for other therapy AHPs, therefore the role of mentoring still remains unclear.

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