

**PERCEPTION OF UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS ABOUT
INTER-PROFESSIONAL LEARNING APPROACH**

**A Case of the Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences and St. John's
University of Tanzania**

BY

JOHN YUDA SUMAYE



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ABSTRACT

A call for collaboration between professions in health and social care is one of the key reforms in healthcare. This came after realizing that, in order to meet the demands of the community, health professionals have to be encouraged to work collaboratively. In this regard, Inter-Professional Learning (IPL) among students of health and allied health sciences has been advocated to break down boundaries between them. Application of this approach has been influenced by various factors including students' perceptions. The purpose of the study was to determine the perception of undergraduate nursing students on IPL approach at Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences and St. John's University of Tanzania. Specific objectives were to determine what the undergraduate nursing students know about the IPL approach, determine their views on the way IPL approach is being implemented in their university and identify challenges faced, during the IPL approach. The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design. A convenient sampling method was adopted to obtain a sample of 240 respondents from the total population of 288 undergraduate nursing students. Data analysis was carried out with the help of *Epi Info*, computer software. Out of 228 respondents, 136 (59.7%) said IPL is effectively applied in the university, 36.4% said it is not effectively applied while the minority 9 (3.9%) pointed out that IPL is not applied at all. A majority of 192 (85.3%) of the respondents revealed that they need the IPL approach in their university. This finding is statistically significant (P value < 0.05). Three main challenges encountered by students exposed to the use of IPL were; inadequate learning/teaching resources 51.8%, schedule conflicts 33.3% and lack of cooperation among learners and lecturers 19.7%. Relevant solutions were suggested by respondents in relation to each problem including, improving learning/teaching resources as suggested by 48%, proper planning to avoid schedule conflicts 28% and promoting cooperation among learners and lecturers 18% respectively. The University and other stakeholders should address the findings of this study because the students' views of the IPL approach suggest opportunities for improvement. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the university constructs or extends the existing lecture halls, purchase functional teaching aids, use varied instruction methods, conducts seminar/workshop on IPL approach, hires/recruit nurse lecturers and provide opportunity for staff and students to be involved in the development of new strategies for better use of IPL in the future.