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Global accolades for patient safety research

Research into patient safety across Europe, led by Northumbria University, has received international acclaim.

The SLIPPS (Shared Learning from Practice to improve Patient Safety) project is a major EU-funded project led by Professor Alison Steven, a Reader in Health Professions Education at Northumbria University. It seeks to improve European patient safety and education across a range of clinical settings.

The team includes Professor Pauline Pearson also from Northumbria

University and colleagues from seven leading universities and five associated health and social care institutions in Finland, Italy, Spain and Norway.

Written on behalf of the SLIPPS team; Sharing Learning from Practice to improve Patient Safety (SLIPPS): a multinational project has been awarded Best Symposium at the 2020 Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Conference while another paper Shared learning from national to international contexts: a research and innovation collaboration to enhance education for patient safety won the 2020 JRN Veronica Bishop Paper of the Year Award.

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, SLIPPS is an innovative education and research project that draws on the real experiences of health and social care students in work placements across five European countries.

Errors, mishaps and misunderstandings are common and around one in 10 patients suffer avoidable harm. These incidents impact upon patients, their families, health care organisations, staff and students. SLIPPS is responding to the challenge to improve patient safety education.

Professor Steven has a longstanding interest in the use of education to raise standards of care and ensure patient safety. Considering the rapid spread of Covid 19, she says improving patient safety and standards of care across Europe and beyond, has never been more important.

“Patient safety is paramount in these extreme circumstances,” said Professor Steven. “The SLIPPS project is unique in that it taps into students’ experiences. These students on practice placements have the potential to offer fresh perspectives on clinical practices, and with so many final-year students treating patients on the front line during this global pandemic, their current views on patient safety are more important than ever.”

The project utilises real-life experiences and students’ reflections on them as the basis for a range of educational resources which feed into an open access virtual learning centre for international, multi-professional learning about patient safety.

The virtual learning tool provides the researchers with vital data used to

inform further studies and create all-important educational resources such as simulation scenarios and virtual seminars that are based on real-life events. A key feature of the tool is that it enables students not only to anonymously describe, but importantly to reflect in a structured way on any patient safety-related experiences they have.

“We are delighted and honoured to receive both accolades for work carried out on behalf of the SLIPPS project,” said Professor Pearson. “Although funding for the three-year project has ended, the website, resources and database is still available and will be for several years to come. Students have responded very positively to the project. We’ve been able to develop educational resources that have been embedded in our own curriculum and in some of our European partners’ curricula too.”

Northumbria University has wide-ranging expertise in research, innovation and education and for patient safety and quality. This expertise supports cutting-edge professional education and practice development. The University’s research seeks to address questions regarding the preparation and development of health care professionals and the translation of professional knowledge both into and out of practice.

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