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Northumbria leads European project to improve patient safety

A Northumbria University-led project to improve patient safety education has been awarded €431,996 in European funding.

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, SLIPPS (Shared Learning from Practice to improve Patient Safety) is an innovative

three-year education and research project that will draw 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.

The project is led by Dr Alison Steven, a Reader in Health Professions Education at Northumbria University. The team includes Professor Pauline Pearson also from Northumbria University and colleagues from six partner universities: Saimaa University of Applied Sciences in Finland; the University of Alicante in Spain; the University of Eastern Finland; the University of Genoa in Italy; Østfold University College in Norway and Lappeenranta University of Technology, in Finland.

There are also health care provider organisations involved in each country, thus the wider group includes: health care educators, front line healthcare professionals, health care managers, patient safety managers, and experts in technology and simulation.

Dr Steven said: “When in work placement settings, student healthcare professionals may witness or be involved in patient safety incidents of varying degrees, some of which showcase best practice, while others may involve errors or misunderstandings.

“These experiences are not always recorded or explored and thus a valuable source of information about patient safety remains untapped and potential learning opportunities are lost.

“SLIPPS will draw on the real experience of students in clinical placements and help to bridge the divide between front line healthcare practice and those engaged in education and research.”

The project aims to utilise these real-life experiences and students’ reflections on them as the basis for a range of educational resources which will feed into an open access virtual learning centre for international, multi-professional learning about patient safety. In addition the project includes the development of an international patient safety education and research network.

The project will run for three years in the first instance and offers many opportunities for future developments.

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