Introduction

The provision of spiritual care is receiving sustained attention in nursing and healthcare. Importantly, the determination of core competencies for spiritual care has now been finalised and agreed in a European context (EPICC 2019). This Erasmus Plus project, led by several international experts in the field - Enhancing Nurses and Midwives’ Competence in Providing Spiritual Care through Innovation, Education and Compassionate Care (EPICC) - is crucial to the support of spiritual care in healthcare for the future by building a European network of nursing and midwifery educators, supported by other key stakeholders in order to share knowledge and skills in spiritual care and inform healthcare practice. Mirroring these international trends there is growing interest in supporting spirituality in healthcare in the Republic of Ireland (ROI). Arising from this, the Spirituality Research and Innovation Group (SRIG) was formed in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin, in 2013. The group aims to provide a platform to develop a greater awareness about the provision of spiritual care in healthcare. Its purpose is to act as a forum to develop a deeper understanding of the concept of spiritual care and to provide a space to promote, debate and discuss the roles of spirituality in healthcare. SRIG host a local and national network in addition to a yearly in international conference (spirituality in healthcare) and members work closely with EPICC towards the realisation of their ultimate goals.

Objective

To outline the progress of SRIG with regard to the to Nurses and Midwives’ Competencies developed by EPICC.

Method

- Review of national health policy and quality standards documents for inclusion of spirituality and EPICC competencies.
- Review of national nursing & midwifery regulatory documentation for inclusion of spirituality and EPICC competencies.
- Review of nurse and midwifery registration programmes for inclusion of spirituality and EPICC competencies.
- Full mapping exercise of competencies across 5 disciplines of BSc Nursing and Midwifery from theoretical and practical perspectives for 2009 and 2018 curricula.
- Purposeful selection of healthcare staffs’ views of emerging competencies.

Conclusions

The competency outcomes of the EPICC project are most closely reflected within guiding value statements and belief frameworks within professional guidance, rather than aimed at specific actions. Many of the 8 original competencies were reflected within the guidance frameworks, although spirituality was not always explicit but encapsulated within an approach of person-centeredness & individualised person centred care. While there is a clear commitment to the recognition of a person’s spirituality in the context of holistic person centred care across most documents & a belief/understanding of the importance of spirituality & spiritual care provision, there limited specific curricular inclusions or specific guidance from national guiding frameworks.

Recommendations

There are major gaps in relation to direction regarding spiritual care assessments & interventions. Increase visibility of spiritual care competencies within programmes- need for a more explicit expression of the emerging competencies across curricula and national documentation.

Increase awareness and visibility in clinical practice around spiritual assessment, care planning & clinical decision making.

References

Enhancing Nurses and Midwives’ Competence in Providing Spiritual Care through Innovation, Education and Compassionate Care (EPICC 2019) NMBI (2015a). Practice Standards for Midwives. Dublin: NMBI.
