

EDITORIAL

Evidence-based Nursing Practice: How to Fill a Gap Between Research and Practice

Aurelija Blaževičienė

Department of Nursing and Care, Medical Academy, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania

“Evidence” may well be one of the most fashionable words in health care. The discourse embraces various combinations including evidence-based practice, evidence-based nursing, evidence-based recommendations, evidence-based decision making, evidence-based policy making, and evidence-informed patient choice.

Sackett (1) defines evidence-based medicine as “the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients. The practice of evidence based medicine means integrating individual clinical expertise with the best available external clinical evidence from systematic research.”

Evidence-based practice is rapidly developing as a growth industry in nursing and health professions more widely. Evidence-based practice is a systematic approach to problem solving for health care providers, including nurses, characterized by the use of the best evidence currently available in clinical decision making, in order to provide the most consistent and best possible care to patients. The message is clear: nurses should ensure that people receive care based on the best possible evidence and care should be delivered in accordance with the needs of individual patients.

In order to implement evidence-based nursing practice, a nurse has to decide which evidence is relevant for a particular patient. A clinical decision should keep the balance between risks and benefits

and should take into account the patient’s unique clinical circumstances, including comorbid conditions and preferences.

Guyatt et al. (2) have reported that a health care specialist must have the ability: to identify knowledge gaps, to formulate clinical questions, to carry out an effective literature search, to apply evidence-based rules, to determine the validity of studies, to apply literature findings appropriately to the patient’s problem, and to understand the patient’s values.

Therefore, we are speaking about evidence-based nursing practice as the gold standard since only such evidence-based practice would generate better results in patient care.

Application of research findings in nursing practice is a major challenge facing nurses in today’s health care, though it is widely acknowledged that scientific research is central to the development of nursing and midwifery as professional disciplines.

When research utilization and the research utilization problem in nursing is discussed, we debate a gap between what is known and what has been done: how do we put valid, useful, and largely scientific information into the hand of, and to be used by, nurses?

The question then arises “Are nurses prepared to engage in this process?”

The answer is “Yes.” The best proof of it is the NERP Journal.

References

1. Sackett DL. Evidence-based medicine. *Semin Perinatol* 1997;21(1):3-5.
2. Guyatt GH, Haynes RB, Jaeschke RZ, Cook DJ, Green L, Naylor CD, et al. Users’ Guides to the Medical Literature: XXV. Evidence-based medicine: principles for applying the Users’ Guides to patient care. Evidence-Based Medicine Working Group. *JAMA* 2000;284(10):1290-6.