

# Understanding the factors that influence school nurses implantation of evidence-based practice



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## Introduction

School nurses in Taiwan provide a broad range of services for children, including routine day-to-day health care services, management chronic illness, and development of screening programs for groups of school children and staff (Adams & Barron, 2009). School nurses also conduct many health promotion programs such as vision health, oral health and healthy weight. They must be knowledgeable about psychosocial problems such as bullying, violence, and mental health issues in addition to providing health education and prevention programs in the school. Research indicated that a consistent use of evidence based practice in traditional health care setting decreases resources use and improves client outcomes (Majid et al., 2011; Micevski, Sarkissian, Byrne, & Smirnis, 2004; Omer, 2012). However, evidence-based nursing practice in health care has been focused mainly on hospital setting. There is little or no research on evidence-based practice (EBP) adoption and implementation among school nurses in Taiwan. With a better understanding of this context, interventions could be developed to provide current evidence-based information in an appropriate format through available channels to reach school nurses.

## Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence the development of EBP in school nursing as well as provide guidance to school nurses on how to better implement EBP in their professional practice.

## Methods

A survey of a random sample of school nurses members of National Association of School Nurses (NASN) resulted in a 45.2% return rate and a sample of 1,211 that was fairly representative of the national membership.

## Results

The mean age of participants was 41.95 years and the rang was from 31 to 62 years. The mean length time employed as a school nurse was 8.4 years. The majority of participants had a Bachelor degree (83.3% %), with 41.3% coming from medium-sized schools. Results found that participant practical knowledge was obtained mainly from their working experience and they relied heavily on the Internet to obtain empirical information.

School nurses had higher qualification, higher-frequency reading journals, and participated research and had evidence-based nursing training, had a better knowledge base and better score in self-efficacy.

Factors influencing EBP development included insufficient time to implement EBP, journal reading frequency, years of work experience, age, continuing education, lack of resources and EBP awareness. School nurses stated they had a positive attitude about EBP and were interested in learning the skills necessary to implement EBP.

## Conclusion

Although the perception of EBP was well defined by the school nurses, certain barriers were highlighted. As school nurses play a crucial role to promote children's health, they need to embrace new and innovative techniques to provide effective health activities. Moreover, school managers should play an active role in supporting environment for EBP implementation. The results of this study can be used as a basis to develop a comprehensive strategy for building EBP competencies through proper training.

## Implications for Practices

This study suggests that a strategic approach to provide resources and create a supportive environment for EBP in school setting is essential. Further initiatives are needed to raise awareness of the importance of using evidence-based practice into school nursing.

