Background and Significance
Contemporary nursing practice requires the use of high-quality evidence to support nursing care decisions. Evidence-based practice is effective in improving the safety and effectiveness of nursing care while improving patients’ health outcomes. Although the body of nursing and allied health knowledge is burgeoning, its influence on patient care decision is lagging. In consideration of foregoing, it is the responsibility of nursing faculty to develop curricula with a strong emphasis on evidence-based practice.

The Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario’s (RNAO) Best Practice Guideline (BPG) Programme is an initiative aimed at increasing the influence of evidence on patient care decisions through direct patient-care actions and nursing education. The RNAO Best Practice spotlight programme engages academic or clinical organizations who submit a proposal to the RNAO to implement and evaluate the impact of BPGs in their organizations. The aim of this partnership is to positively influence patient care through evidence-based practice. BPGs address a specific patient care or health system issue. They are systematically developed, actionable, practice recommendations which are informed by the best available evidence.

The three-year candidacy period (2015 – 2018) prior to evaluation for BPSO designation began with the convening of an implementation team and Lead. Early strategies to ensure success included a literature search to facilitate an evidence-based approach to BPG implementation. During this process it became evident that the literature provides nurses in clinical practice with extensive guidance on strategies to integrate BPGs and evidence-based practice into patient care decisions. The literature also provided extensive support for evidence-based change management in a variety of settings. However, there is a paucity of literature which provides support and guidance for nurse educators who wish to integrate BPGs and evidence-based practice into the nursing curriculum. The aim of this paper is to fill that gap by outlining strategies used by the implementation team at a school of nursing, to successfully integrate select BPGs into the nursing curriculum.

Design
Qualitative descriptive design

Method
Members of the implementation committee, the BPSO lead, guideline implementation leads, and faculty were interviewed at the end of the candidacy period. Informal discussions with student groups also provided data to describe the strategies.
Results
Data were collected from a single academic organization. Informants identified the following as strategies which facilitated successful BPSO designation: assigning a capable BPSO implementation lead and team; identifying a project sponsor; gaining support from all levels; engaging champions at all levels; and ensuring congruence between selected BPG and curriculum need.

Conclusion
Strategies identified by the participants provided valuable insight into strategies and innovations for facilitating successful BPSO designation and the integration of evidence-based practice into the nursing curriculum. This article written in partial fulfilment of the agreement between the RNAO and the school of nursing provides insight into their journey to becoming the first institution in the region to receive RNAO’s designation as a Best Practice Spotlight Organization.

Title:
Strategies for Successful Implementation of Best Practices Guidelines in a Nursing Curriculum

Keywords:
Best Practice Guidelines Implementation, Evidence-based Practice and RNAO BPSO

References:

Abstract Summary:
The UWI School of Nursing, Mona (UWISON) became the first in the Caribbean to be designated a Best Practice Spotlight Organization through the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario (RNAO). This paper outlines strategies used by UWISON’s implementation team to successfully integrate select RNAO Best Practice Guidelines into their nursing curriculum.

Content Outline:
Introduction
1. Contemporary nursing practice requires the use of high-quality evidence to support nursing care decisions.
   1 a. Evidence-based practice is effective in improving the safety and effectiveness of nursing care while improving patients’ health outcomes. Although the body of nursing and allied health knowledge is burgeoning, its influence on patient care decision is lagging. In consideration of foregoing, it is the responsibility of nursing faculty to develop curricula with a strong emphasis on evidence-based practice.

2. The Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario’s (RNAO) Best Practice Guideline (BPG) Programme is an initiative aimed at increasing the influence of evidence on patient care decisions through direct patient-care actions and nursing education.
   2 a. The RNAO Best Practice spotlight programme engages academic or clinical organizations who submit a proposal to the RNAO to implement and evaluate the impact of BPGs in their organizations. The aim of this partnership is to positively influence patient care through evidence-based practice. BPGs address a specific patient care or health system issue. They are systematically developed, actionable, practice recommendations which are informed by the best available evidence.

3. The school’s three-year candidacy period (2015 – 2018) prior to evaluation for BPSO designation began with the convening of an implementation team and Lead.
   3 a. Early strategies to ensure success included a literature search to facilitate an evidence-based approach to BPG implementation. During this process it became evident that the literature provides nurses in clinical practice with extensive guidance on strategies to integrate BPGs and evidence-based practice into patient care decisions. The literature also provided extensive support for evidence-based change management in a variety of settings. However, there is a paucity of literature which provides support and guidance for nurse educators who wish to integrate BPGs and evidence-based practice into the nursing curriculum. The aim of this paper is to fill that gap by outlining strategies used by the implementation team at a school of nursing, to successfully integrate select BPGs into the nursing curriculum.

Body

1. Design
   1 a. A qualitative descriptive design was used.

2. Method
   2 a. Members of the implementation committee, the BPSO lead, guideline implementation leads, and faculty were interviewed at the end of the three-year candidacy period. Informal discussions with student groups also provided data to describe the strategies.

3. Results
   Data were collected from a single academic organization. Informants identified the following as strategies which facilitated successful BPSO designation:
   3 a. Assigning a capable BPSO implementation lead and team
   Assigning a capable BPSO implementation Lead is arguably the most important strategy for successful integration of Best Practice Guidelines in an institution. It through their actions that the conditions for creating change are created. The Lead facilitates the change process by undertaking management responsibilities, such as planning, organization, and supervising efforts to facilitate change.
   3 b. Identifying a project sponsor
The project sponsor is a highly influential person in the organization who request the initiation of the project, the Head of School, Faculty Dean or Senior Academic. The project sponsor confers their authority onto the BPSO lead by signing the Agreement with the RNAO which names the Lead and outlines their roles, responsibilities and powers. This conferment of authority is influential especially in those times when the authority of the BPSO Lead is questioned or challenged by an unwilling team member. The project sponsor usually acts alone or in consort with other senior members to name a capable implementation lead. In addition to the legitimizing the Lead’s authority, the sponsor supports the implementation by serving as a resource person, an escalation point for matters which are outside the powers of the Lead, securing the resources, financial and otherwise.

3 c. Gaining support from all levels

The likelihood of successful uptake of best practices within an organization increases when leaders at all levels are committed to support facilitation of guideline implementation (RNAO, 2012). Prior to the initiation of the project, the implementation committee identified leaders and key stakeholders from various sectors which have an interest in the regulation and/or implementation of nursing education. These included groups such as student governance bodies, the Nursing council of Jamaica, the leadership of The University of the West Indies, Directors of Nursing Services at clinical sites and nursing faculty.

The decision to engage the leadership of University and the local regulatory council stemmed from the regulatory role they play in nursing education. The UWI Board of Undergraduate Studies (BUS), determines academic requirements, and the regulatory council, determines professional standards and regulates the undergraduate nursing programme, throughout which Best Practice Guidelines were integrated.

The implementation team anticipated that this integration could necessitate curriculum changes, therefore, it was important to engage the regulators in the process from the outset. This achieved the goal of increasing their awareness about the BPSO programme while gaining their support for the proposed changes. The School received written support from the leadership of both groups which paved the way for the implementation team to proceed in the Programme.

3 d. Engaging champions at all levels

The RNAO (2012) describes BPG champions as “nurses and other health-care professionals who are educated and trained to better understand evidence-based practice, BPGs and the process of introducing evidence-based practice into clinical settings” (p. 9). Champions facilitate successful uptake of BPGs by informing others of BPG recommendations by providing potential users with education, support and mentorship, leveraging of their influence over their peers or supervisees, and tailoring implementation strategies to suit the organization’s context.

3 e. ensuring congruence between selected BPG and curriculum need

Conclusion

1. Strategies identified by the participants provided valuable insight into strategies and innovations for facilitating successful BPSO designation and the integration of evidence-based practice into the nursing curriculum.
2. With the thrust to promote evidence-based practice in nursing education, these strategies could provide useful guidance for other schools of nursing seeking to become BPSOs or to integrate evidence-based practice in the nursing curriculum.

3. This article written in partial fulfillment of the agreement between the RNAO and the school of nursing provides insight into their journey to becoming the first institution in the region to receive RNAO’s designation as a Best Practice Spotlight Organization.

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