Straight From the Nurse’s Mouth: EBP Knowledge Among Beginning RNs
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Abstract
Evidence-based practice (EBP) is an expectation among health professionals due to its incontestable positive impact on patient safety and care quality. As a cornerstone of professional nursing, EBP is now a standard of professional performance and ethical practice, as well as a core competency for nursing education. EBP is consistently described as the integration of research evidence, patient preferences and values, and clinician expertise. Despite professional agreement regarding its definition and importance, EBP in nursing remains seemingly inadequate. Research into EBP barriers often points to knowledge deficit as a significant contributor to this issue. Yet, it remains unclear what this “knowledge” entails. While multiple professional organizations and researchers have identified outcomes associated with EBP knowledge, the concept of EBP knowledge in New Nurses is obscure. A hybrid concept analysis was undertaken to expand the current understanding of EBP knowledge and to form a refined definition of EBP knowledge in new nurses. The outcomes of this concept analysis will enhance the profession’s awareness of new nurses’ EBP knowledge needs and allow for the development of pre- and post-licensure interventions that improve use of EBP among new nurses.

Method
Hybrid Concept Analysis®
• Theoretical Analysis
  • Literature review
    • What is the nature of EBP knowledge? How is EBP knowledge defined? How is EBP knowledge measured? Instruments designed to measure EBP in nursing.
  • Fieldwork
    • University IRB approval
    • Semi-structured interviews with new RNs (n=4)
      • < 12 months experience
      • New assessment degree
    • What is EBP? What knowledge is needed to use EBP? Do you have PIs knowledge? Analytical phase
  • Iterative analysis of theoretical and fieldwork data.

Conclusions
New nurses’ evidence-based practice knowledge is a distinct concept defined as the fundamental EBP facts and principles that prompt new nurses to ask a clinical question, initiate a search for evidence, and seek help to evaluate research findings. New nurses know that EBP involves asking a question, finding evidence, and evaluating research articles for the purpose of improving patient outcomes, but have limited procedural know-how associated with these steps the EBP process.

New nurses arrive at their professional roles with sufficient understanding of EBP principles to initiate the EBP process through clinical inquiry.

Implications
Nurse Educators
Foster procedural knowledge (“know how”) in addition to propositional knowledge (“know that”); Develop EBP learning goals related to procedural knowledge for formulating searchable clinical questions, searching for evidence, and evaluating evidence.

Nurse Leaders
Value new nurses’ curiosity about clinical problems; Model, validate, and encourage new nurses’ EBP behaviors.

Nurse Administrators
Ensure new nurses have access to research evidence (e.g., database subscriptions); Consider implementing EBP mentor programs to foster new nurses’ EBP knowledge development.

References

Fieldwork Phase
New nurses describe EBP knowledge as:
• Distinguishing between tradition-based and evidence-based practice
• Asking “why” – noting discrepancies and questioning current practices
• Navigating the evidence
• Accessing research – free resources, limited access
• Interpreting research – lack of knowledge and skills

Analytical Phase
New nurses’ descriptions of EBP knowledge are not fully congruent with existing definitions and measures:
• New nurses describe EBP knowledge in terms of EBP steps 1-3
• Both new nurses and instruments tend to overlook EBP steps 4-5
• New nurses ask “why”, but not in the form of searchable clinical questions (i.e. PICO)
• New nurses know why, when, and generally where to find evidence, but not how to find or evaluate it.

Sample Demographics
- Age: 20-30
- Gender: Female
- Experience: First year RN
- NICU, L&D/PP, CVICU, MICU
- Race: Caucasian
- Ethnicity: Caucasian
- Age: 36 years (mean=27)
- Wks: 9
- Days: 5
- Sats: 88%

Statement: New nurses have a lack of knowledge and skills related to EBP knowledge. New nurses need to be taught how to search for evidence and evaluate research findings. New nurses need to be taught how to form searchable clinical questions and evaluate research findings.