Title:
Early Evidence-Based Practice (EBP): Florence Nightingale and the Pavilion-Style Hospital

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Session Title:
Evidence-Based Practice Posters Session 2

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Florence Nightingale, Pavilion Hospital design and early Evidence Based Practice

References:


Abstract Summary:
While many nurses see EBP as a new approach to improve patient outcomes utilizing systematic research, one example of this method of research and application was first presented by Florence Nightingale in the 1850's and then used in the U.S. in the 1860's.

Learning Activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss the research that Florence Nightingale conducted to identify the best hospital design and related features.</td>
<td>Describe the research, visits, interviews, and statistics she did with hospitals around Europe and their design features to identify the best ones and ultimately identifying the one best design.</td>
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<td>Describe the application of her research utilizing examples in the US during the 1860's.</td>
<td>Describe the dissemination of her research and best design and how it was utilized in the US during the 1860's.</td>
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<td>Explain how this was a very early example of Evidence Based Practice (EBP).</td>
<td>Align her research, dissemination, and application with the currently accepted idea of EBP to demonstrate this historical project's existence well before EBP's recognized birth in 1972 and widespread use in the 2000's.</td>
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Abstract Text:
Evidence-based practice (EBP) abounds today in journals, books, conferences, courses, and in the mind of every practicing nurse or soon to be nurse. Most clinicians would agree with Melnyk and Fineout-Overholt (2015) that globally it is the “key to delivering the highest quality of healthcare and insuring the best patient outcomes…” and results in “…improved health, safety, and cost outcomes, including a decrease in patient morbidity and mortality” (p.3). While the initiative began with Dr. Archie Cochrane about 1972 it has exploded in the past 2 decades with many researchers, authors, and nurses onboard.

However the first evidence of the use of EBP and the first completed EBP project was documented many decades previous by Florence Nightingale (FN) in the 1850’s with practice or application in the 1860’s and later. All nurses are familiar with FN’s famous book, Notes on Nursing: What It Is and What It Is Not (1859), but most nurses have never heard of her earlier book, Notes on Hospitals (1858/59). When the 2 books are viewed together with the steps of inquiry, the research question, the record & blueprint reviews, the observations, the clinician & patient interviews, the analysis, the statistics, the morbidity & mortality outcomes, and finally the dissemination, it is one enormous EBP project. Granted there are limitations and freedoms that must be taken, and given, due to the early evolution of nursing and medicine, obvious lack of technology, an understanding of the knowledge of the day, and the restriction of most of the research being completed by only one very dedicated lady nurse, but it meets the definition of EBP.

FN studied hospitals, their designs, and their patient outcomes throughout England, Germany, France, and the battlefields of the Crimean War during the 1850’s. From her research she determined the best hospital design – the pavilion-style – and the best hospital environment for the best patient outcomes. Her extensive research and her design findings were detailed in her papers of 1858 and then the book Notes on Hospitals in 1859. Her results detailing the best environment for optimal outcomes – light, ventilation, warmth, hygiene, food, cleanliness, and observation – were reported in her later book Notes on Nursing. That later book was a best seller in the U.S. in the early 1860’s and was used by many lay persons and volunteer nurses to guide their nursing practice during the American Civil War. Equally noteworthy was the fact that most newly constructed hospitals built during the same war (1861-65) for the military were constructed using the pavilion-style that she praised in her earlier book. Large military hospitals containing thousands of beds on both sides including Chimborazo in Richmond, Satterlee in West Philadelphia, and Armory Square in Washington DC all utilized her recommended design. She would continue on to be a consultant/advisor on design for 50 hospitals mostly in the U.K. and one in the U.S. – Johns Hopkins in Baltimore MD (McDonald, 2012). Her work was often interdisciplinary.