



A Framework for Guiding Patient Care

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Evidence-based nursing practice (EBNP) is a framework for guiding nursing services and approaching patient care. This manner of caring requires nursing professionals to rely on reliable research findings more often than experience or intuition (1, 2). EBNP is meant to guide treatment of patients in a step-by-step process and initiated during the late 1970s (1). However, the ideas behind the practice were introduced long before by nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale. According to Carole Cooper, "Nightingale assessed the environment, collected data, identified interventions and monitored patient outcomes." This approach mirrors modern-day evidence-based practice (3). Use of EBP increased gradually in response to emphasis of the health care organizations, agencies, and governments on high-quality and efficient care to improve patients' outcomes (4). While medical and health research findings were available, doctors and nurses were not able to access or implement the new information quickly enough. Evidence based nursing practice or evidence-informed decision-making not only improves the quality of nursing practice but it is essential to effect changes across the health care system. Health

care Practice can be considered evidence based when a majority of health care staff base their clinical and educational practices on high-quality evidence. For the nursing profession EBNP implies that individual nurses have the skills and knowledge to search for, appraise, and use the best research evidence when making clinical decisions (4). It is a constant interactive process involving the explicit, meticulous and sensible consideration of the best available evidence to provide care. Then, the outcomes for clients will be optimized, health of the communities will be promoted, improved and cost-effective nursing care will be achieved and accountability and transparency of decision making within the health care system will be ensured (5). The practice of evidence-based nursing involves: Formulation of an answerable question to address a specific patient problem or situation; systematic searching for the research evidence that could be used to answer the question; appraisal of the validity, relevance and applicability of the research evidence; integration of the research evidence with other information that might influence the management of the patient's problems; as well as clinical expertise, patient preference for alterna-

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► Implication for health policy/practice/research/medical education:

Higher policy makers and senior nursing managers should encourage evidence based nursing practice. Using evidence-based practice can assist the advanced practice nurse to implement new evidence appropriately and successfully into practice.

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tive forms of care, and available resources; implementation of the evidence-based practice decision; and finally, evaluation of the outcome of the decision (6). While nurses have positive attitude toward EBNP, health care managers and need to be committed to the principles of EBNP, and create a supportive environment for its implementation (7). Clinical nurse educators and clinical nurse specialists are also responsible for keeping themselves and their nursing staff up to date on new evidence and research. This knowledge translation occurs in a complex environment that includes many stakeholders, different cultures and beliefs, and budget restraints. This complex environment impacts how, when, and who will transfer new evidence into practice (8, 9). We have to explore whether using evidence-based practice can assist the advanced practice nurse to implement new evidence appropriately and successfully into practice. The use of new evidence should enable patients to receive the most up to date, evidence based care, improve the quality of care patients receive, and enhance patient safety.

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