

*Review Article*

# Challenges of Implementing Evidence Based Practice

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## Abstract

Nurses play a leadership role in promotion of Evidence Based Practice (EBP) and ensure that the best scientific evidence with patient advocacy is used in health care delivery. Although there appears to be widespread support of Evidence-based Nursing as a basis for rational actions, the challenges to it are significant and often justified. A multitude of factors affect Evidence Based Practice in Nursing including patient preferences and social circumstances, clinical experience, competing demands from more pressing clinical conditions and organizational policies. The recent transition from authority-based Nursing Practice has driven fundamental changes in clinical practice, Nursing research and Nursing education.

**Key words:** Evidence Based Practice, Challenges

## 1 Evidence Based Practice

Evidence-based practice refers to making right decisions about patient care based on the best evidence obtained by systematically conducted clinical research. In order to bridge the gap between research and nursing practice, special attention need to be given for EBP.

EBP can contribute to quality nursing care delivery by developing clinical practice guides, updating professional knowledge, developing nursing as science, improving the credibility of nurses as autonomous professionals, improving health status of patients and limiting overall health care costs and seeks health care attention through using in timely manner results of updated and reliable research

Evidence-based Practice considers the client values are at the center of the health care practices and make sure that clients and family members have a significant contribution in receiving their healthcare services. In this sense EBP ensure that both client values and practices are considered while providing healthcare services.

Evidence Based Practice can assist nursing care practitioners to make the most appropriate clinical decision with the integration of all the above aspects. Therefore evidence-based practice is all about assisting the nursing care providers in delivering highest degree care that will help patients to recover in the shortest time possible. Thus, it creates a positive consultative and involving process between nurses and clients by ensuring the contribution of both in making right decision based on the best practice.

## 2 Challenges of implementing evidence based practice

From various study reports it is found that there is a significant improvement in health outcome of patients who are treated through Evidence Based Nursing Practices. A well designed nursing research studies have shown that improved patient outcomes are more likely to be understood clearly when nurses use research evidence in implementing nursing care to patients. However, there are many obstructions which have made it difficult to implement EBP in healthcare settings, especially for non experience nursing practitioners. There are many nurses who are struggling to implement Evidence Based Practice in their practice area due to various reasons.

### 2.1 Lack of knowledge on use of evidence based

Studies have found that most of the nurses do not have enough knowledge on Evidence Practice to integrate Nursing research findings in providing quality care to their clients. Especially young nurses do not have knowledge on the implementation of EBP in their practices.

*A study done by Bonner and Sandon that sought to examine the knowledge, attitude and nurses use of research found out that there was variance in EBP knowledge among nurse. The study concluded that in order to overcome knowledge barrier, nurses need to have specific research education in their nursing curriculum, leadership role and enabling work*

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environment to implement EBP effectively in their practices.

## 2.2 Misperception and negative attitudes on research and evidence based practices.

It was found that most of the nurses manifest negative attitude towards conducting research as well as utilizing research findings and they do not understand Evidence Based Practice properly. This problem has been continuing especially among old nurses due to fear of change.

*However, a study by Bonner and Sandon found out that senior nurses were likely to have positive attitude towards research and implementation of EBP compared to younger nurses. In this study, only 44% of the nurses showed positive attitude towards research and willingness to undertake extensive research studies.*

## 2.3 Lack of knowledge on how to carry out search and appraise best

There has been identified problem on the knowledge of nurses on how to carry out research. Those three factors which determine nurse utilization of research include individual characteristics of nurse, characteristics of the organizations, and environmental characteristics. It was found that most nurses are not well equipped to carry out nursing research which leads to effective Evidence Based Nursing practice (Bonner and Sandon, 2008).

*In a study by Bonner and Sandon, it was found out that while 58.9% of the participants had gone through a research unit in their study, only a dismal 14.5% showed a good understanding of research design and only 10.8% understood statistics and data interpretation. In this study, 36.3% of participants had lacks of skills as a barrier to implementation of EBP.*

## 2.4 Overload of nursing work that leaves them with no time to carry out research -

With increased shortage in nursing and in other areas of medical care, workload has become a major problem both in implementation of EBP and also in provision of general healthcare.

*In a study by Bonner and Sandon lack of enough time to carry out the study, which emanates from work overload was identified as the third highest barrier with 44.9%, after re-*

*sources 55.2% and support from peers 49.7%. With overload of works, nurses do not have time to carry out research.*

## 2.5 Constraints within the organization

For one to carry out extensive research there must be resources such as adequate nursing journals, books, internet, and other resources with credible research findings.

*In Bonner and Sandon study, 55.2% identified resource constraint as one of the barriers to implementation of EBP which ranks it higher above all other constraints.*

## 2.6 Contradictory patient's expectations

There are some patients who may demand to be given antibiotics for upper respiratory infection which may not be indicated in their physician's prescription. Most patients who come to seek healthcare services come with preconceived ideas about the nursing care based on their previous health care experiences, hence most nurses therefore restrain from implementing EBP due to fear of doing wrong against patients expectations.

## 2.7 Fear for one to have different practice from what other nurses or medical peers

Usually all nurses carry over practice which directly emanates from organizational culture. Most nurses have found out when they join a health care facility, there is culture of care that has been carried over. Nurses will therefore manifest fear to implement Evidence Based Practice as it may deviate from the normal routine nursing practices.

## 2.8 Lack of support from peers

Many nurses with self motivation does not get appreciation from peer group and their efforts on EBP will get un noticed.

*A study done by Bonner and Sandon identified that 29.7% of the nurses had lack of support from peers is the second largest barrier.*

## 2.9 Large amount of information

that can be found in nursing journals and books which sometimes may be confusing to practitioners.

*There is a large amount of information from different research findings and some of the information found, may be inaccurate and hence confusing to most nurses. Nurses therefore find it difficult to identify the correct information to be used in Nursing practice.*

## 3 Other Challenges

•**Physician and patient factors** Nurse practitioners noted that both doctors and patients have different values and beliefs that may conflict with providing care based on high evidence

•**Limited access to up-to-date user-friendly technology and computer systems** Adequate computer resources are essential for EBP implementation as identified by a nurse practitioner and nurse manager

•**The availability of relevant evidence,** Many nurses faces problems in tracking down the best evidence available to answer regarding practice needs

•**The time and ability to interpret evidence appropriately** A challenge faced by many practitioners is that of having no enough time and skills necessary to obtain and analyze available data

•**The translation of knowledge into clinical practice** Biased research and publications, poor quality research and failure of researchers to present evidence in forms useful to practitioners

## 4 Conclusion

Practicing nurses must be prepared to formulate questions, critically assess practice, and evaluate research, clinical guidelines, and levels of evidence. Despite substantive development and systems in place to promote EBP, many hospital systems internationally have yet to integrate an evidence-based model of care. Barriers to successful implementation arise from multiple factors including varying education and clinical experiences of nursing staff, and a lack of understanding about its' importance to optimal high quality patient care.

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