What is Evidence-Based Practice?
An Interprofessional Approach to Clinical Decision-making

A Did You Know? poster by the PSC Research and Evidence-based Practice Sub-Committee

DEFINITION

“Evidence based practice (EBP) is the judicious and conscientious use of current best evidence in conjunction with clinical expertise and patient values to guide health care decisions.”
(Titler, Chapter 7, in Hughes, 2008).

Simply stated ... EBP is a method of clinical decision-making.

1) ASK A CLINICAL QUESTION:

PICO is a mnemonic that helps to develop a well-focused question.

P: Patient/Problem/Population: the subject of the clinical question.

I: Intervention/Issues: the treatment that might be applied to the subject (P).

C: Comparison: an alternative treatment to compare (there may not always be a comparative intervention).

O: Outcome: the expected result of the intervention (may also be the outcome of interest).

Example: Do adult abdominal surgery patients (Population) who have music therapy in PACU (Intervention) require less narcotic analgesia for postoperative pain (Outcome) than those who do not use music therapy in PACU (Comparison)?

2) FIND THE BEST EVIDENCE


Clinical guidelines are often utilized as resources in clinical practice and are from reputable organizations. The following link brings you to a national clearinghouse for clinical guidelines: http://www.guideline.gov/

To learn more, go to: HealthStream, MGH EBP: Finding the Best Evidence (2011). The Treadwell librarians are here to help

3) WEIGH THE EVIDENCE

Your clinical leadership or member of the Research and EBP Committee (REBP) can guide you to the right person(s) to help you learn the process of critiquing and weighing the evidence.

4) PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Work with your clinical leadership to plan a change in practice. They will assist with planning a trial, or pilot of the practice change before finalizing and disseminating the new practice. Work as a team to develop your new/revised policy. This is where changes to clinical practice occur.

For an example of changing practice related to delirium, go to: HealthStream: MGH Evidence-based Nursing Practice Delirium Recognition and Screening (2011)

EBP IS THE FOUNDATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL PRACTICE. EBP:

• Improves clinical outcomes and quality
• Increases satisfaction for patients/families, staff, and faculty
• Improves efficiency.
• Decreases disparities.
• Decreases costs.

IS ALL EVIDENCE THE SAME?

There are several types and levels of evidence-based practice resources.

The levels are displayed as an evidence pyramid with the strongest evidence at the top (systematic reviews).

The Treadwell evidence pyramid web page includes links to all of the online evidence resources at Treadwell Library. Use it to select the appropriate sources when searching for each level of evidence.

To learn more, go to: HealthStream. Evidence-Based Practice in Nursing: Advancing the Art and the Science (2010).

EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE IS A PROCESS

The four main steps of the EBP process are:

1. Ask a clinical question.
2. Find the best evidence.
3. Weigh (evaluate) the evidence.
4. Put it into practice.
REFERENCES

American Association of Critical Care Nurses. AACN Researching the Evidence Pocket Reference, Product #400759, revised April 2011.

