

Structured learning
programme and workbook



Value Life



INFECTION PREVENTION & SAFETY

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Evidence-based practice

The importance of evidence-based practice (EBP)

- Evidence-based practice is encouraged and promoted for the use of best evidence to provide a high-quality health service (Tagney and Haines, 2009; McKenna et al, 2004)
- With patient empowerment, health professionals can and are expected to deliver high-quality care underpinned by the best, most up-to-date evidence (Emanuel et al, 2011)
- The Nursing and Midwifery Council's code of practice states that nurses and midwives should base their practice on the best available evidence.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council code of practice summary (NMC)

- The Nursing and Midwifery Council stipulate that nurses and midwives, in order to practice effectively, should 'always practise in line with the best available evidence'
- To achieve this, the following must be undertaken:
 - a) Making sure that any information or advice given is evidence based including information relating to using any health and care products or services
 - b) Maintaining the knowledge and skills needed for safe and effective practice.

What is evidence-based practice?

- NHS England (2013) define it as the 'integration of best research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values'
- It means that when health professionals make a treatment decision with their patient, they base it on their clinical expertise, the preferences of the patient, and the best available evidence
- Evidence-based nursing (EBN) is therefore an approach to making quality decisions and providing nursing care based upon personal clinical expertise in combination with the most current, relevant research available on the topic. This approach is using evidence-based practice (EBP) as a foundation
- Best evidence entails best nursing research, knowledge, management, policy, and practice
- The goal of evidence-based nursing is to improve the health and safety of patients while also providing care in a cost-effective manner to improve the outcomes for both the patient and the healthcare system.



Key considerations for evidence-based practice

- Always question current practices as a nursing professional
- Integrate evidence-based practice as higher standard/mission/philosophy and include competencies for evidence-based practice
- Evidence-based practice mentors for skills and knowledge availability to others to provide and help
- Tools to enhance evidence-based practice (e.g. meetings, educational/classroom time, access to, etc.)
- Higher level support and ability for leaders to model valued evidence-based practice skills
- Recognition of use of evidence-based practice often (Melnik and Fineout-Overholt, E. (2015).



A structured approach to evidence-based practice

When adopting evidence-based practice it should be structured and consistent. A structured approach could be the following:

- Formulating a clinical question
- Searching for and collating the evidence
- Critically appraising the evidence
- Integrating and implementing the evidence
- Evaluating and auditing the outcomes
- Disseminating the outcomes.

The evidence-based process

- Ask
- Acquire
- Appraise
- Apply
- Assess
- Disseminate.

Formulating the clinical question

There are two types of clinical questions

- a) Foreground questions
- b) Background questions.

(Fineout-Overholt E, Johnston L, 2005; Nollan R, et al, 2005; Straus SE, 2005)

Foreground questions

- Are specific and relevant to the clinical issue
- Foreground questions must be asked to determine which of two clinical interventions are the most effective in improving patient outcomes and clinical decision making
- A specific, well-defined question generally can only be answered by searching the current literature for studies comparing two interventions
- Foreground questions include the following elements: (PICO)
 - Population (P)
 - Intervention or Issue of Interest (I)
 - Comparison Intervention or Issue of Interest (C)
 - Outcome (O)

P	I	C	O
Population patient problem	Intervention or exposure	Comparison	Outcome
Who are the patients? What is the problem?	What do we do to them? What are they exposed to?	What do we compare the intervention with?	What happens? What is the outcome?

Background Questions

Are considerably broader and when answered, provide general knowledge:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?

Searching for and collating evidence

- Evidence from systematic reviews or meta-analysis of randomised control trials
- Evidence from well-designed randomised control trials
- Evidence from well-designed control trials that are not randomised
- Evidence from case-control or cohort studies
- Evidence from systematic reviews of descriptive or qualitative studies
- Evidence from a single descriptive or qualitative study
- Evidence from expert opinions.



Critically appraising the evidence

There are normally three key questions:

1) Are the results of the study valid?

- Measures the validity
- In order to be valid, the results of the study must be as close to the truth as possible
- The study must also be conducted using best available research methods.

2) What are the results?

- Measures the reliability of the study.
- If it is an intervention study, reliability consists of:
 - a) Whether the intervention worked
 - b) How large the effect was
 - c) Whether a clinician could repeat the study with similar results.

If it is a qualitative study, reliability would be measured by determining if the research accomplished the purpose of the study.

3) Will the results be applicable in caring for patients?

- Measures the applicability
- The study may be used in practice when caring for patients if the subjects are similar to the patients being cared for, the benefit outweighs the harm, the study is feasible, and the patient desires the treatment.

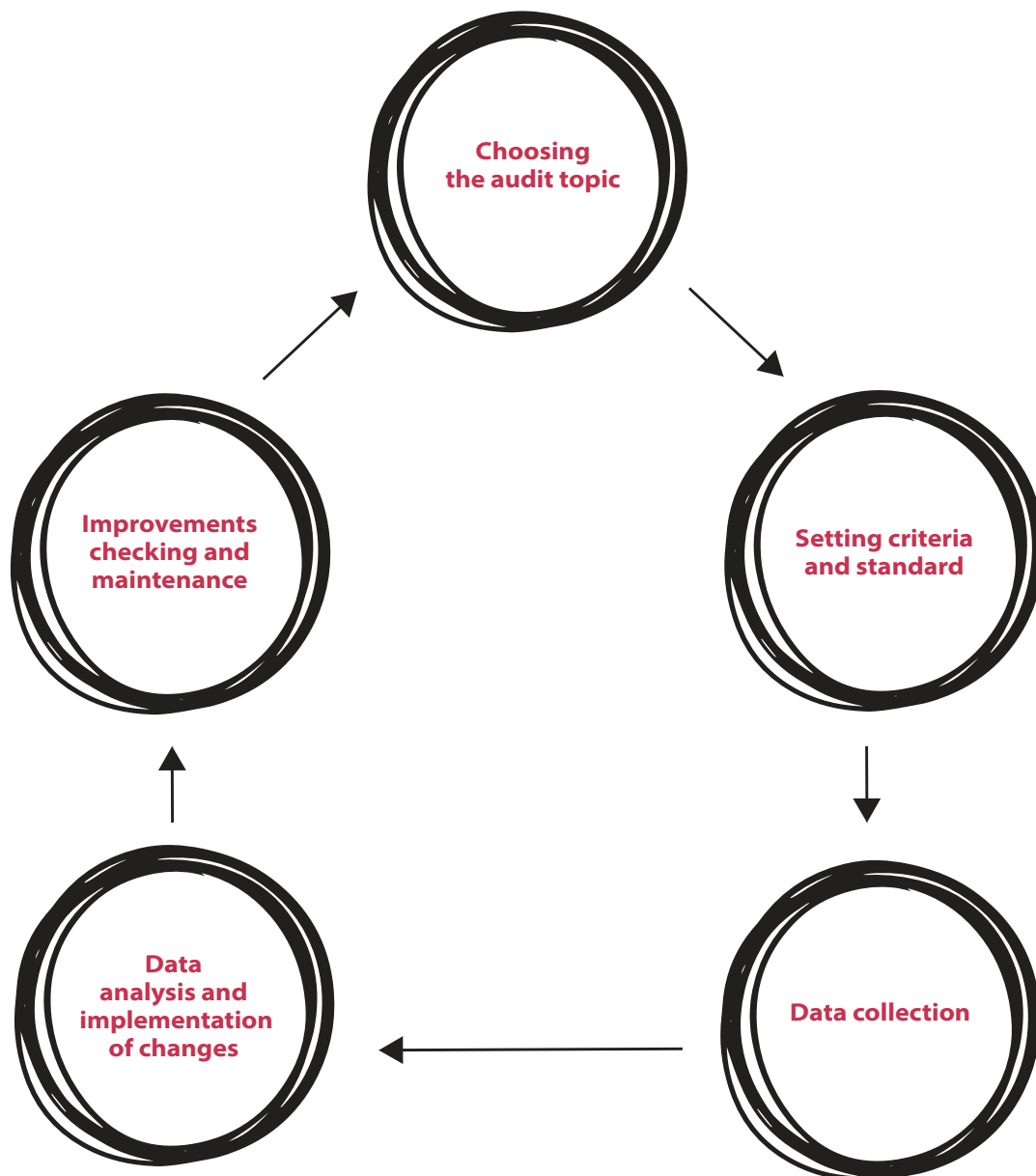
Integrating the evidence

- After appraising the evidence, it is necessary to integrate it with the provider's expertise and patient's preferences
- The patient is encouraged to practice autonomy and participate in the decision-making process
- Therefore, even if the study has successful outcomes, the patient may refuse to receive a treatment
- Assessment findings and patient history may reveal further contraindications to a certain evidence-based treatment.



Evaluating outcomes

- The next step in the evidence-based practice process is to evaluate/audit whether the treatment was effective in terms of patient outcomes
- It is important to evaluate the outcomes in a real-world clinical setting to determine the impact of the evidence-based change on healthcare quality. (Melnyk, B.M. and Fineout-Overholt, 2015)



Disseminating outcomes

- The last step is to share the information especially if positive outcomes are achieved
- By sharing the results of evidence-based practice process, others may benefit
- Some methods to disseminate the information include presentations at conferences, rounds within one's own institution, and journal publications.

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