

“Research to Practice”: A Practical Program to Enhance the Use of Evidence-Based Practice at the Unit Level

Liz Cooke, RN, MN, ANP, AOCN[®], Cynthia Smith-Idell, RN, BA, MSN, AOCN[®], Grace Dean, RN, PhD, Robin Gemmill, RN, MSN, Sharon Steingass, RN, MSN, AOCN[®], Virginia Sun, RN, MSN, Marcia Grant, RN, DNSc, FAAN, and Tami Borneman, RN, MSN

Purpose/Objectives: To assist clinical nurses in translating research into clinical practice.

Data Sources: City of Hope Quality-of-Life (QOL) Model to guide presentations and discussion, research utilization theories, and evidence-based practice literature.

Data Synthesis: Based on percentage of individual participant involvement, the four domains of QOL, and a knowledge survey.

Outcomes: Attendance, discussion, QOL domain ranking, satisfaction, and pre- and postknowledge scores. Attendance averaged 13 individuals; average discussion participation was 54%. The psychological QOL domain was most important (58%), and discussion averaged a score of 3 (1 = slow to 5 = lively). A one-point increase (scale 1–5) measured a change in knowledge.

Conclusions: The challenge for nursing assessment is to fully address patient issues in the psychological domain.

Implications for Nursing: A practical program can be formulated to bring evidence-based practice to the clinical setting.

Key Points . . .

- ▶ Oncology nurses attempting to shift evidence-based practice to guide clinical decision making may encounter major obstacles.
- ▶ A practical research outreach program to staff can enhance evidence-based practice.
- ▶ Nurses consistently identified psychological issues as the most important to present information about and discuss.

Increasing emphasis is being placed on finding evidence to guide, change, and implement nursing practice (Jassak, 2001). However, the attempt to shift to evidence-based practice (EBP) to guide clinical decision making encounters major obstacles when applied at the unit level (DiCenso, Cullum, & Ciliska, 1998; Gennaro, Hodnett, & Kearney, 2001; Lopez-Bushnell, 2002; McCaughan, Thompson, Cullum, Sheldon, & Thompson, 2002; Mulhall, 1998). This article discusses one institution's approach to bring EBP to the unit level using a method to educate unit nursing staff members and increase participation and critical thinking. This particular approach was spearheaded by an advanced practice nurse (APN) team.

Literature Review

What is EBP or evidence-based care? According to Mulhall (1998), evidence-based care concerns the incorporation of evidence from research, clinical expertise, and preferences into decisions about the health care of individual patients. Jassak (2001) described EBP as an approach to clinical decision making that can be used by all oncology nurses to improve patient care and outcomes. EBP is used to define clinical

practices and protocols using authoritative evidence derived from clinical research by categorizing “levels of evidence” into weight of importance that each study carries based on its methodology. Within day-to-day oncology nursing practice, EBP assists nurses to incorporate state-of-the-art treatment recommendations into patient care (Jassak).

Rutledge and Bookbinder (2002) described theories of knowledge utilization (diffusion and linkage) and its subfield, research utilization. APNs can serve as linkage agents to connect clinical staff to a wide range of research knowledge. In a descriptive exploratory study by Asselin (2001), the staff nurse's role in selecting and transferring new knowledge to practice is described. In the study, knowledge utilization originates with nurses who are active in selecting and using new knowledge from the literature. The author postulated that the

Liz Cooke, RN, MN, ANP, AOCN[®], is a research specialist, Cynthia Smith-Idell, RN, BA, MSN, AOCN[®], is a professional practice leader, Grace Dean, RN, PhD, is an assistant research scientist, Robin Gemmill, RN, MSN, is a professional practice leader, Sharon Steingass, RN, MSN, AOCN[®], is a professional practice leader, Virginia Sun, RN, MSN, is a research specialist, and Marcia Grant, RN, DNSc, FAAN, is a director and research scientist, all at the City of Hope National Medical Center in Duarte, CA; and Tami Borneman, RN, MSN, is a research specialist and palliative care nurse educator at Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center in Washington, DC. (Submitted July 2003. Accepted for publication August 15, 2003.)

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/04.ONF.825-832