Changing Nephrology Nurses’ Beliefs about the Value of Evidence-Based Practice and Their Ability to Implement in Clinical Practice

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A rapidly evolving healthcare environment demands sound research evidence to inform clinical practice and improve patient outcomes. Over the past several decades, nurses have generated new knowledge by conducting research studies, but it may take anywhere from 8 to 30 years for this evidence to be implemented in practice (Hutchinson & Johnson, 2006). This delay has prompted the call for all nurses to engage in evidence-based practice (EBP), where research evidence is translated into practice through clinical projects. EBP is a problem-solving approach to clinical decision-making that integrates the best available evidence and clinical expertise, along with patient preference and values (Melynk & Fineout-Overholt, 2015). Active participation in EBP is essential to achieve the triple aim of health care: 1) enhance the experience of care, 2) improve the health of populations, and 3) reduce per capita costs of care (Berwick, Nolan, & Whittington, 2008; Melynk & Fineout-Overholt, 2015).

As nurses strive to be leaders and active participants in healthcare redesign, it is essential that they possess the requisite knowledge and skills to engage in EBP (Hain & Kear, 2015). The Future of Nursing report emphasized the importance of the role of nursing in interprofessional teams that focus on improving healthcare delivery systems and patient care through EBP (Institute of Medicine [IOM], 2011). The Health Professions Education report (IOM, 2003) stressed the need for educational programs to prepare health care professionals, including nurses, to provide the highest quality

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A rapidly evolving healthcare environment demands sound research evidence to inform clinical practice and improve patient outcomes. Over the past several decades, nurses have generated new knowledge by conducting research studies, but it takes time for this evidence to be implemented in practice. As nurses strive to be leaders and active participants in healthcare redesign, it is essential that they possess the requisite knowledge and skills to engage in evidence-based practice (EBP). Professional nursing organizations can make substantial contributions to the move healthcare quality forward by providing EBP workshops similar to those conducted by the American Nephrology Nurses’ Association.

Key Words: Evidence-based practice, nephrology nursing values, belief system.

Goal
To provide an overview of the findings of a descriptive study exploring nephrology nurses’ beliefs about the value of evidence-based practice (EBP) and their ability to implement into practice.

Objectives
1. Describe the role of nephrology nurses in evidence-based practice (EBP).
2. Report the findings of a descriptive study exploring nephrology nurses’ beliefs about the value of EBP and their ability to implement into practice.
3. Discuss the clinical implications of study findings.

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Note: Additional statements of disclosure and instructions for CNE evaluation can be found on page 567.
and safest health care. In addition, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) essentials for nursing education, which includes essentials for baccalaureate (pre-licensure and RN completion programs), masters, and practice doctoral programs, recommends teaching strategies that support EBP be integrated across the nursing curriculum (AACN, 2015). Although this may be occurring in many nursing educational programs, some practicing nephrology nurses may not have received this type of education during their academic pursuits, making it important to discover other strategies to assure they are prepared to integrate EBP into nephrology clinical practice areas. One way to provide this education is through professional organizations like the American Nephrology Nurses’ Association (ANNA).

ANNA leadership agreed to support its Research Committee in the development and implementation of a pre-conference EBP workshop aimed at increasing nephrology nurses’ knowledge and skills to engage in EBP. Although knowledge of EBP is essential, it is not enough to change behavior. Nurses’ beliefs about the benefits of EBP to improve clinical practice and patient outcomes, and the ability to implement EBP into practice, play an important role in motivating nurses to learn more and gain necessary skills to engage in EBP. Although knowledge of EBP is essential, it is not enough to change behavior. Nurses’ beliefs about the benefits of EBP to improve clinical practice and patient outcomes, and the ability to implement EBP into practice, play an important role in motivating nurses to learn more and gain necessary skills to engage in EBP. Nurses’ beliefs about the benefits of EBP to improve clinical practice and patient outcomes, and the ability to implement EBP into practice, play an important role in motivating nurses to learn more and gain necessary skills to engage in EBP.

The purpose of this study was to explore nephrology nurses’ beliefs about the value of EBP and their ability to implement EBP into clinical practice. The research questions were:

- How does attending a nursing organization pre-conference EBP workshop affect nephrology nurses’ beliefs about the value of EBP?
- How does attending a nursing organization pre-conference EBP workshop affect nephrology nurses’ beliefs about the ability to implement EBP?

### Participants

A convenience sample of nephrology nurses attending the EBP pre-conferences comprised the sample. Seventeen nurses attended the April 2014 conference, with 15 completing demographic and survey information. Seventy-six nurses registered for the October 2014 conference, and 57 participated in the survey. Table 1 illustrates the demographic participant characteristics.

### Procedure

Pre-conference participants were provided with a verbal and/or written description of the study. Completion of the pre- and post-tests implied consent to participate in the study. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time during the study.

### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS v. 22. Data were normally distributed.

### Table 1: Demographics of Pre-Conference Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>April 2014 Conference</th>
<th>October 2014 Conference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female 93% (n = 14)</td>
<td>Female 92% (n = 70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>M = 53.4 (SD = 9.09)</td>
<td>M = 50.2 (SD = 10.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Caucasian 87% (n = 13)</td>
<td>Caucasian 66% (n = 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>ADN 27% (n = 4)</td>
<td>ADN 28% (n = 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BSN 40% (n = 6)</td>
<td>BSN 36% (n = 27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MSN 27% (n = 4)</td>
<td>MSN 34% (n = 26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse type</td>
<td>RN 93% (n = 14)</td>
<td>RN 82% (n = 62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APN 7% (n = 1)</td>
<td>APN 17% (n = 13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The findings of this study indicate that a pre-conference EBP workshop can change nephrology nurses’ beliefs regarding the value of EBP and their ability to implement EBP in practice. The increased difference in mean pre-conference scores among type of nurse is likely attributed to their educational preparation. This difference was also present in the mean scores by educational preparation, with MSN and doctorally prepared nurses having higher beliefs about EBP value than ADN/diploma and BSN prepared nurses. This is not surprising because EBP is most likely presented in greater depth in advanced degree nursing programs. It is encouraging to see the increase in post-conference scores across all levels; however, there is still a level of discomfort about one’s own ability to implement EBP in the workplace, but ongoing education may increase one’s confidence.

Although the findings from this descriptive study lack generalizability, the results have important practice and research implications. The importance of EBP cannot be overstated. To achieve the IOM’s (2003) 2020 goal that 90% of clinical decisions be evidence-based, it is critical that all nurses, including nephrology nurses, engage in EBP and no longer “do things the way we have always done them” (Hain & Kear, 2015, p. 19). Nurse leaders and educators play an essential role in facilitating learning opportunities about EBP as well as providing supportive environments that reduce the many barriers to EBP (Melynk, Fineout-Overholt, Gallagher-Ford, & Kaplan, 2012). The ANNA Research Committee and ANNA leaders had the foresight to seek alternative learning opportunities for members. The success of this program provides an exemplar for other professional nursing organizations and demonstrates the role organizations play in advancing EBP.

As a descriptive study, a causal relationship between attending an EBP pre-conference workshop and implementation of EBP cannot be
made. The findings from this study indicate that nephrology nurses are more confident in their knowledge about EBP and the belief that they can make practice changes using EBP. There is a need for follow-up research examining the frequency of performing specific EBP activities. Melnyk et al. (2008) developed a uni-dimensional 18-item EBP Implementation Scale© that has demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.96) and could be used to measure the extent to which EBP is implemented in practice. In addition, research is needed to evaluate the impact EBP workshops have on skill development.

Conclusion

Professional nursing organizations can make substantial contributions to the move healthcare quality forward by providing EBP workshops similar to the one discussed in this article. Discovering unique ways to change beliefs of the value of EBP and one’s ability to implement in practice is an important first step to assist nurses’ in gaining knowledge and skills to integrate EBP into nephrology practice.

References

Changing Nephrology Nurses’ Beliefs about the Value of Evidence-Based Practice and Their Ability to Implement in Clinical Practice

1. I verify I have completed this activity. □ Yes □ No

2. What do you plan to change in your practice as a result of completing this educational activity?

3. What information, from this activity, do you plan to share with a professional colleague?

4. What did you value most about this educational activity?

5. I was able to meet the objectives of this educational activity:
   a. Describe the role of nephrology nurses in evidence-based practice (EBP).
      □ Strongly Disagree □ Agree (Circle one)
   b. Report the findings of a descriptive study exploring nephrology nurses’ beliefs about the value of EBP and their ability to implement into practice.
      □ Strongly Disagree □ Agree (Circle one)
   c. Discuss the clinical implications of study findings.
      □ Strongly Disagree □ Agree (Circle one)
   d. The content was current and relevant.
      □ Strongly Disagree □ Agree (Circle one)
   e. The objectives could be achieved using the content provided.
      □ Strongly Disagree □ Agree (Circle one)
   f. This was an effective method to learn this content.
      □ Strongly Disagree □ Agree (Circle one)
   g. I am more confident in my abilities since completing this material.
      □ Strongly Disagree □ Agree (Circle one)
   h. The material was (check one):
      □ New □ Review
   i. This activity was free of commercial bias. (check one – if no please comment)
      □ Yes □ No

Note: If you wish to keep the journal intact, you may photocopy the answer sheet or access this activity at www.anannurse.org/journal

Evaluation Form

(All questions must be answered to complete the learning activity. Longer answers to open-ended questions may be typed on a separate page.)

1. I verify I have completed this activity. □ Yes □ No

   SIGNATURE

2. What do you plan to change in your practice as a result of completing this educational activity?

3. What information, from this activity, do you plan to share with a professional colleague?

4. What did you value most about this educational activity?

   Strongly
   Strongly
   Disagree       Agree
   (Circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5

5. I was able to meet the objectives of this educational activity:
   a. Describe the role of nephrology nurses in evidence-based practice (EBP).
      □ Strongly Disagree □ Agree (Circle one)
   b. Report the findings of a descriptive study exploring nephrology nurses’ beliefs about the value of EBP and their ability to implement into practice.
      □ Strongly Disagree □ Agree (Circle one)
   c. Discuss the clinical implications of study findings.
      □ Strongly Disagree □ Agree (Circle one)
   d. The content was current and relevant.
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      □ New □ Review
   i. This activity was free of commercial bias. (check one – if no please comment)
      □ Yes □ No