The Feasibility of Introducing an Evidence Based Practice Cycle into a Clinical Area: An Evaluation of Process and Outcome

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Aims

To examine the feasibility of introducing an evidence based practice cycle into one clinical area of a BSc pre-registration programme in order to integrate EBP theory with practice.

To further develop EBP skills and knowledge in the clinical setting.
Design & Methods

- A feasibility study using a pre-post test design
- Practice area: Cardiac ITU & HDU; four 3rd year BSc Adult Nursing students (& their mentors)
  - students had EBP module year 1; research methods year 2
- Five week EBP cycle that consisted of 4 meetings:
  - (i) outline project, baseline data; (ii) identify & confirm case to develop searchable question; (iii) critical appraisal; (iv) summary & final evaluation data
- Web site to co-ordinate resources & provide links to academic team
Methods (contd.) - Focus of Evaluation

• **Process evaluation:**
  - Ease of identifying practice area
  - Duration of EBP cycle
  - Ease of participation from student & mentor perspective
  - Feasibility of incorporation of cycle into undergraduate curriculum

• **Outcome evaluation:**
  - Perception of whether EBP cycle impacted on students’ practice
  - Perceived value of cycle from students’ & mentors’ perspectives
Findings - Process

• Cycle was straightforward to set up but impossible to include students from more than one programme
• Time constraints for both students and their mentors
• Duration of cycle considered appropriate (5 weeks)
• Difficulties identified in accessing computers (students & mentors)
## % Fresno Scores

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Influence on Practice

• Valuable insights provided into how key clinical decisions were made
• Students felt participation in the cycle improved their knowledge of the management of the patient group studied
• Process aided integration into the unit (students & mentors)
• Perceived value by students & mentors of all elements of EBP process
• Able to use information collected in practice portfolio
• Felt university staff rather than mentors should be lead facilitators
Conclusions & Recommendations

• Feasible to incorporate EBP cycle in 3rd year placement
• Process revealed lack of knowledge about research methods at pre-test
• Students showed some improvement in knowledge and skills in key EBP elements
• Participation in the cycle developed students’ knowledge around the case identified
• Taking part aided students’ integration into the unit
• Mentors unable to provide support as anticipated
• Problems with access to computers on the unit (for both mentors & students)

Next Step

Research to identify alternative ways of: (i) enabling students to access relevant resources electronically; & (ii) providing students with academic support