

Scientific Evidence for Decision-Making in Nursing

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This editorial article aims to point out the relevance of scientific evidence for decision-making in nursing, since scientific knowledge has evolved exponentially in recent decades allowing a collection of information in just a few seconds. This fact may be due to the technological changes represented by a transformation process. Researchers adopt different instruments guided by new paradigms when they envision new approaches in the science direction [1].

This movement's implication is the significant increase in research and scientific publications, which is currently a problem in terms of the selection and qualified analysis of the scientific literature available. However, it is an imperative, advantageous, and fundamental problem for the progress of knowledge, which can hinder the contextualization of the phenomenon with misinterpretation and judgment [1]. Given this demand, there is a need for syntheses that seek to facilitate access to information, enabling conclusions based on the combination of results from multiple sources.

In this context, Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) assists in this analysis as it is characterized as using the best available evidence to make clinical decisions in the health area. Nursing goes back to Florence Nightingale's first essays [2]. However, from the decade of 1970, PBE assumes an aggregating health care position [3], bringing research and care practice closer together. Considering that one of its stages is the evaluation of the results obtained from investigations, it subsidizes the minimization in the use of tacit data, based on a search and critical evaluation of the available evidence. In this movement, Nursing incorporated the concept of Evidence-Based Nursing Practice (EBNP) [4].

Professional nurses have increased interest in seeking scientific evidence to solve problems in clinical practice. In a critical and systematic judgment of the information available, this care entails health care related decision-making. Thus, EBNP has a fundamental role since it aims to establish criteria that systematize and organize data for theoretical/practical implementation, which must be combined with the professional's experience, as evidence in isolation does not support clinical practice [5]. For this reason, EBNP includes five stages in its process: assessment of the patient's clinical status, analysis of the patient's life context, evaluation of health-related resources to improve or recover the clinical condition, analysis of evidence from research, and evaluation of the professionals who will perform the health care actions. Regarding the analysis of evidence, bibliographic research methods can be used, which will depend on the problem to be elucidated. The main methods used in EBNP are systematic literature review, meta-analysis, meta-synthesis, and integrative literature review [1].

Thus, evidence has a relevant role in decision making. It enables professionals to use the best evidence for improving the quality of care allowing reliability. Also, it reframes the clinical judgment and praxis of nurses.

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