Relationship between Nurses’ Experience Level and Utilization of Clinical Research in Practice

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Background

It is argued whether clinical research is useful for nurses in practice (Shih 2001). Clinical research:
• Should be used by healthcare professionals to help with patient care
• Should be accessible to healthcare professionals
• Should be easy to comprehend and communicate to patients
However, research has demonstrated that nurses (and other healthcare professionals) do not utilize the research literature when making clinical care decisions. It is important to understand why this is occurring.

Purpose of Study

To investigate the utilization of research between more experienced and less experienced nurses. To determine if this is one of the factors that might help us understand the lack of utilization of the research literature.

Methods

• 18 phone interviews were conducted with nurses across the United States specializing in traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, and/or burn injury
• Interviewers asked a number of questions about how nurses use research in their practice
• Each nurse was asked the number of years of experience they have in the field
• We defined “more experienced” nurses as having at least 10 years of clinical practice
• “Less experienced” nurses had fewer than 10 years of clinical practice

Results

An analysis of the answers to the questions about the utilization of research was conducted using a word cloud (Figure 1). The results showed no significant difference between nurses with more experience in the field and nurses with less experience in the field and their utilization of research in practice.

Conclusions

• The amount of experience level did not influence the amount of research nurses utilized
• More research must be conducted in order to further determine this relationship between nurses’ experience and the utilization of research in practice
• There are other confounding variables that may have influenced these results
• Some nurses do not have time to research due to their busy schedule
• Some nurses do not have access to the research they desire
• A more comprehensive resource could be a way to encourage nurses to utilize research (Chen 2013)

Table 1. Participant characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>More Experienced Nurses</th>
<th>Less Experienced Nurses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (Mean(SD))</td>
<td>40.4 (8.6)</td>
<td>44.8 (7.5)</td>
<td>33.6 (5.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender (Female)</td>
<td>17 (94%)</td>
<td>11 (100%)</td>
<td>6 (86%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>5 (28%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Master’s level or above)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Years of Experience (Mean(SD))</td>
<td>13.0 (7.4)</td>
<td>16.7 (7.2)</td>
<td>7.1 (1.7)</td>
</tr>
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References
