

Mentorship-A Key to Evidence-Based Practice and Policies

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Problem

Evidence-based practice (EBP) is essential for nurses and allied health professionals. Many schools now teach the fundamentals of EBP, but seasoned staff often lack these skills.

Evidence

Clinical Practice Council members responsible for policy reviews reported being at a loss for finding and appraising evidence. Several policies were presented with outdated practices and inadequate support following educational sessions during council orientation.

Strategy

An EBP Scholars program was created to teach skills that enable clinicians to conduct extensive evaluations of existing evidence to improve pediatric patient care. One of the primary objectives of the EBP Scholars program is to support integration of appropriate research evidence into policy review processes. A key component of successful practice change is mentorship.

Professional Practice Change

EBP Scholars choose a policy scheduled for review or work on their area's own projects. A mentor works with each team every week to apply lecture content to the policy or project. Mentors guide teams in topic and question development, search strategy, search sources, critical appraisal of evidence, stakeholder involvement, benchmarking, practice recommendations, policy revision, presentation, and effective practice change strategies. Faculty from the Center for Research and EBP provide support and guidance to mentors throughout the project. Tools used in the program include a search source worksheet, critical appraisal guides, and templates for literature reviews, evidence summaries, presentations, and professional posters.

Evaluation and Results

Since program implementation in 2006, 16 mentors have guided 121 Scholars to successful completion. Forty-seven policies have been updated and six projects completed. Adjustments to course content have been based on participant evaluations.

Recommendations

A didactic course coupled with extensive mentorship supports organizational culture changes for staff at the bedside to have the knowledge, tools, and expert guidance to critically evaluate and integrate evidence into their own professional practices and positively impact patient outcomes.

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