Evidence-Based Guidelines as a Necessity for Advanced Practice Nurses

Senn B, Kobleder A* and Schiess C
Department for Applied Nursing Sciences IPW, University of Applied Sciences FHS St. Gallen, Switzerland

EDITORIAL

In the last decades, new nursing models with different skills and grade mixes were developed and defined for several settings. Specialized nursing roles focus for example on family care, pediatric care, community health or gerontological care. This is an important step to meet specific needs of diverse patient populations and to further develop and promote Evidence-based nursing.

For these new Advanced Practice Nurses (APN) there is great demand to develop role concepts for specific patient populations, e.g. gyn onc patients, which focus on direct clinical practice based on competencies like guidance and coaching, consultation, Evidence-based practice, leadership, collaboration and ethical decision-making [1]. APN actions have to be organized according to clinical pathways, defining sequences and time of major interventions of nursing staff, physicians and other professionals. Furthermore, state-of-the-art knowledge, based on the latest research results is especially relevant for APN’s. Evidence-based guidelines are the best way to apply this knowledge into practice. Guidelines are developed in order to make nursing services appropriate, effective and efficient. So far, such guidelines for APN’s are often missing.

APN practice applying Evidence-based guidelines for special patient populations support thoughtful clinical decision-making even in times of limited financial and personal resources and increasing demand on patient safety. We need to evaluate already existing standards of various institutions and develop new Evidence-based guidelines, e.g. in order to provide optimal advice particularly for patients with chronic health conditions and to enhance patients’ coping and self-management with their symptoms in everyday life.

Evidence-based guidelines support nurses to explain and justify their interventions and to contribute to professionalization, as it is already usual practice by physicians to use guidelines to strengthen patient treatment quality.

Our central messages for current APN practice are:

- APN practice needs more scientific evidence of high quality, i.e. by national Evidence-based guidelines instead of guidelines varying between institutions. Next to of internal and external evidence sources, patient expertise should continuously be taken into account.

In this context it is essential that APN’s take into consideration the principles of Evidence-based nursing. A clinical decision can only be made based on knowledge that derives from a variety of sources, i.e. patient preferences, a reflected clinical experience, information about the local conditions of the institution and qualitative and quantitative research [2].

In clinical practice it can be challenging to identify and evaluate relevant scientific knowledge in the abundance of research literature. Several institutions like the Southern California Evidence-Based Practice Canter or the Swiss EBN Center of the FHS St.Gallen, Switzerland, and support e.g.

(A) Identification of comprehensible and concise nursing research,

(B) Access to international scientific literature,

(C) Rapid orientation on a wide spectrum of clinical and health services themes and

(D) Exchange for standards and guidelines of high methodological quality.

Excellent clinical nursing emerges in cooperation between nursing practice, other disciplines, other professions of health and renowned scientists. This goal can be accomplished by means of continuous exchange between scientists and nurses. Therefore, we rely on institutional networking to enhance a lively dialogue between science and practice to optimize personalized care, e.g. in Academic Practice Partnerships to further develop quality of Advanced Practice Nursing. Through this collaboration we are able to develop and implement Evidence-based guidelines for APN’s caring for specific patient populations.

REFERENCES

