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Overcoming Barriers for the Implementation of Evidence-Based Practice through Journal Clubs

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Introduction of the Problem

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) set a goal that by the year 2020, 90% of all clinical decisions will be supported by accurate, timely, and up-to-date clinical information that reflects the best available evidence (Stavor, Zedreck-Gonzalez, & Hoffmann, 2017). Patient care and nursing practice are guided by research that supports the best practice for optimal patient outcomes. Patient safety, patient satisfaction, improved outcomes, and improved cost-effectiveness are a few of the benefits of evidence-based practice (EBP) and are imperative in a rural practice setting (Stavor, Zedreck-Gonzalez, & Hoffmann, 2017).

Evidence-based practice is the standard of care in hospitals today. However, many barriers exist at a 134-bed rural hospital in southern Illinois that hinder consistent generation, evaluation, and implementation of evidence-based research into practice. In general, barriers that exist in rural settings include but are not limited to, lack of research appraisal knowledge and skills, lack of nurses' individual and organizational readiness for EBP, misperceptions or negative attitudes about research and evidence-based care, lack of belief that evidence-based practice will result in more positive outcomes than traditional care, lack of time and resources to search for and critically appraise evidence, lack of evidence-based practice mentors, organizational constraints such as lack of leadership support or incentives, and resistance to change (Stavor, Zedreck-Gonzalez, & Hoffmann, 2017).

Through the identification of the barriers to research use and the implementation of EBP through education and journal club implementation, a step approach plan was implemented to increase the confidence of the nursing staff regarding the research process, which will improve compliance with future protocol implementation (Stavor, Zedreck-Gonzalez, & Hoffmann, 2017).

Literature Review

A systematic review of literature was performed with a focus on rural hospitals, journal clubs, barriers to evidence-based practice (EBP), the Iowa Model of Evidence-Based Practice and Kotter and Cohen's eight step model of change. The methods used to collect/select the evidence included searches of electronic databases including the Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL).

Results of the literature review provided evidence toward organizing the project on the following themes; a) importance of EBP, b) barriers to EBP, c) nursing readiness for EBP, d) resource utilization to overcome barriers, and e) culture of life-long learning.

Project Methods

The foundation of this project and ability for its successful implementation was made possible subsequent to the recent collaboration and integration between a 134-bed rural hospital in southern Illinois and a 413-bed regional care hospital system. The integration gave the rural hospital critical tools needed to facilitate meeting the goals of this project. The purpose of this project was to remove some of the existing barriers to evidence-based practice (EBP), evaluate current confidence levels of the registered nursing staff in EBP, educate staff in critical elements of EBP, and provide usable resources for implementation of the research into practice through the development of journal clubs in a rural southern Illinois hospital.

The project was presented to the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Institutional Review Board (IRB) and it was concluded that the project did not meet the definition of research and thus, further IRB approval was not needed. This was deemed a quality improvement project completed through a phase approach utilizing a modified version of Kotter's Model of Change, referred to as the 4C model (McGonigal, 2017). This model served

to promote a simplistic approach in overcoming the barriers and increasing resources for the implementation of EBP in a rural southern Illinois hospital through journal clubs. The 4C model consists of center, collaboration, change, and celebration.

Center

Overcoming barriers and increasing resources for the implementation of EBP was accomplished with the assistance of EBP mentors at the parent organization along with access to an online library, research, mentors, a hospital system librarian, education and workshops available within the hospital system.

Collaboration

For this project, nurses that had expressed specific interest in EBP and the implementation of journal clubs were selected to serve as champions in facilitating the change process. The champions collaborated with content experts or mentors at the parent organization to receive additional education and training. The collaboration phase included educational training sessions at the parent organization as described in the subsequent paragraph.

A total of six select champions attended an EBP educational immersion day at the parent organization. The select champions also completed, "Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice in Healthcare", a self-paced massive open online course taught by Bernadette Melnyk, Lynn Gallagher-Ford and Cindy Zellefrow. One lead RN champion participated in the annual EBP Scholar Program for Nurses through the parent organization. This program consisted of a literature review phase and an implementation phase.

Change

The RNcEBP Survey, consisting of questions to self-rate individual confidence level in various steps of the EBP process, was conducted at the southern Illinois hospital. The survey

will repeat each year to monitor growth in EBP confidence at the southern Illinois hospital specifically and the hospital system overall.

The RNcEBP Survey results allowed the champions to determine how to best focus training, support, and resources to increase EBP within the organization. 122 nurses participated in the rural southern Illinois hospital RNcEBP Survey. The results revealed that the nurses were familiar with the concept of EBP, have positive attitudes, and are confident that EBP changes can improve patient outcomes. The nursing staff lack experience and knowledge in analyzing and evaluating literature to support implementing evidence-based practice changes. The RNcEBP Survey was a great start to understanding the existing barriers that hinder consistent generation, evaluation, and implementation of evidence-based research into practice.

To facilitate the implementation and sustainability of EBP, the nursing champions utilized the Iowa Model of Evidence-Based Practice to Promote Quality Care conceptual framework to facilitate the implementation of journal clubs. Virtual journal clubs (VJC) offered through WordPress was an additional option to increase participation due to the limitations of accessibility. The VJCs were accessible anytime and anywhere. Nurses can now share ideas and interests with others from different departments and participate at their own pace in a non-threatening convenient environment (Berger, Hardin, & Topp, 2011).

Celebration

Celebrating successful implementation of journal clubs and EBP initiatives resulting from the journal clubs was essential to ensure the new changes are to be sustained as a result of this process improvement project (Melnik, & Fineout-Overholt, 2014).

Evaluation

A form from the Oncology Nursing Society, was adapted to assist the rural southern Illinois hospital in evaluating the outcomes of journal clubs. This form addresses how

recommendations for change compare with current practices in the clinical setting. The form identifies if the department manager was informed of the need to investigate this topic further to develop an EBP project or team to allow for the implementation of the EBP change.

In May 2018, nurses at the rural southern Illinois hospital were invited and encouraged to attend the rural southern Illinois hospitals first journal club meeting. The first meeting had eleven participants. The first portion of the meeting was an educational session in which participants learned about EBP, the forms utilized to assist in the reviewing and evaluating literature, and system resources available to assist with literature reviews. The second portion of the journal club involved analyzing an article addressing the use of the Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation (SBAR) framework to determine the effectiveness during patient handoff communication between healthcare providers.

Impact on Practice

Building a culture where nurses are empowered to use EBP to improve outcomes is built over time and requires an ongoing investment of time and resources to implement the strategies that will enhance the nurses' knowledge and skills within an environment where EBP can be sustained. The data within this project indicates that educating the nursing staff on accessing and evaluating literature for potential implementation into current practice will assist in improving EBP initiatives and patient care. The nurses who participated in the journal club expressed that they believe EBP results in the best clinical care for patients. The eleven participants learned valuable evidence-based practice information about the utilization of a standard handoff communication form and want to move forward in the next steps of creating a team to implement this evidence-based information into current practice. The participants had strong beliefs that

through journal clubs they could overcome the barriers that they previously felt in implementing EBP prior to participating.

To increase EBP education and journal club participation, participants want to include a site on the intranet for nurses to place potential ideas for journal club topics. The nursing participants also felt that EBP education and journal club participation at department meetings would be beneficial in making the greatest impact in escalating this practice change initiative in daily nursing practice.

Conclusions

Aligning a 134-bed rural Illinois hospital with the practices of a 413-bed regional care hospital system has provided opportunities to reduce the variations of care delivered in cost-effective and efficient ways. The implementation of journal clubs empowered the hospital nursing staff to utilize the new resources to increase their knowledge, skill, and appreciation for EBP and implement change processes into practice based on literature review.

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