

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE GLOSSARY

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Best practice: An approach or procedure that has produced outstanding results in a previous situation or setting and could be adapted to improve effectiveness of clinical practice in a current situation or setting.

Case study: research design (usually prospective) that systematically describes a single person, group, or event.

Clinical report (case report): narrative description of the history of a single patient, group or event; not considered a research method because it lacks the rigor and depth of a case study

Case-control study: retrospective research design that compares individuals with a specific condition to those without it, using matched controls; purpose is usually to identify predictors or correlates of a condition (*causation*)

Clinical Practice Guidelines: Statements of recommendations for assessment and intervention for a specific diagnosis or condition; CPG's are based on rigorous analysis & synthesis of existing evidence by an expert consensus group.

Cohort study: prospective research design that studies the outcomes of two groups of people over time: those who were exposed to a condition and those who were not. The purpose is to identify differences between groups over time (*prognosis*)

Controlled trial: experimental design that studies the effect of an intervention or treatment using at least two groups: one that received the intervention and one that did not; participants are NOT randomly assigned to a group (*therapy, prevention*)

Evidenced-based practice: “A problem solving approach to practice that involves the conscientious use of current best evidence in making decisions about patient care; EBP incorporates a systematic search for and critical appraisal of the most relevant evidence to answer a clinical question along with one’s own clinical expertise and patient values and preference.”

[Melnik, B. & Fineout-Overholt, E. (2005). *Evidence-based Practice in Nursing and Healthcare: A Guide to Best Practice*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins.]

“A process finding, appraising and applying scientific evidence to the treatment and management of health care. EBP is the discovery of underlying trends and principles developed from the accumulation and refinement of a large body of studies. The processes of EBP creates new, state of the science knowledge, summarized and clarified for translation into best practice for clinical policy.”

[Ledbetter, C.A. & Stevens, K.R. (2000). Basics of evidence-based practice part 2: Unscrambling the terms and processes. *Seminars in Perioperative Nursing*, 9(3), 98-104.]

Expert opinion: recommendations from persons with established expertise in a specific clinical area, often based on clinical experience; not considered a research method because systematic inquiry is lacking.

Instrument-testing study: descriptive research design, measures accuracy or prognostic ability of assessment tools or diagnostic/screening tools by comparing them to a “gold standard” (instrument or technique with known reliability & validity); (*diagnosis*)

Meta-analysis: systematic synthesis of results of multiple studies of a phenomenon using quantitative techniques; the purpose is to draw conclusions about a condition or effectiveness of an intervention based on data from multiple studies.

Qualitative research: method that systematically examines a phenomenon using an inductive approach & exploration of meaning of phenomenon; purpose is to understand & describe human experience, explore meanings & patterns; data are often narrative (*meaning*)

Quantitative research: method that systematically examines phenomena using a deductive approach & measurement of variables, purpose is to describe variables, investigate relationships among variables, determine cause & effect; data are often numerical.

Randomized Controlled Trial: experimental design that studies the effect of an intervention or treatment using at least two groups: one that received the intervention and one that did not; participants ARE randomly assigned to a group (*therapy, prevention*)

Research (nursing): A systematic and rigorous investigation using established scientific methods that validates and refines existing knowledge and develops new knowledge; the goal is development of an empirical body of knowledge to guide nursing practice

Research utilization: - Summarizing and using research findings to address a nursing practice problem

Systematic Review: systematic synthesis of results of multiple studies of a phenomenon using non-statistical techniques; an expert panel develops rigorous guidelines to delineate a focus, locate, appraise & synthesize evidence; purpose is to draw conclusions based on existing evidence