

Development of Virtual Journal Club for Nurses in Improving Evidence-based Practice

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Undoubtedly, Evidence-based Practice (EBP) contributes to enhanced patient outcomes, with nurses being the largest healthcare provider group. Especially in cases of poor patient prognosis, treatment decisions are often influenced by colleagues' successful approaches. Journal clubs prove effective in various learning outcomes, including enhancing knowledge, critical appraisal skills, perceived reading habits, and reading behavior. Virtual Journal Clubs (vJCs) have greater potential to address time constraints, low participant attendance, and other minor obstacles compared to traditional face-to-face journal clubs. Nurses' impact on promoting evidence-based practice is consistent across aspects such as improved knowledge, critical appraisal skills, research utilization skills, interest in conducting research, and nursing skills.

Introduction

Addressing wasteful spending is imperative in healthcare delivery, management, and organizational governance (OECD, 2017). In the UK, the healthcare expenditure in 2020 reached £269 billion, marking a 20% nominal increase from 2019 (Cooper, 2021). Hong Kong and Singapore also allocate substantial funds to healthcare, with evidence-based practice being a key driver for patient safety, streamlined care, efficiency, and cost reduction (Kwan, 2020). Also, the government health expenditure in Singapore surpassed the S\$10 billion mark in the Financial Year (FY) 2018. And it is tripled from S\$3.745 billion in FY2009 to S\$ 11.3 billion in FY2019 (Lim, 2022). Evidence-based practice can improve patient safety, streamline care, increase efficiency, and lower costs (Diaz & Walsh, 2018). EBP constitutes a problem-solving method in clinical decision-making, taking into account three primary elements: the most reliable research evidence, clinical expertise, and the values and preferences of the patient (Schaefer & Welton, 2017). In the global pandemic, constantly changing information impacts the normalization of the best practices (UNCW, 2021). Clinicians and healthcare providers need to stay up-to-date while simultaneously assessing the quality and validity of information, given that the virus doesn't pause for the science to catch up (ANA, 2022).

Evolution of Journal Club

Nurses constitute the largest group of healthcare providers and play a crucial role in promoting healthcare (Alzayyat, 2014). Enhancing nurse engagement in Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) involves considering factors for integrating EBP concepts into the nursing curriculum through alternative pedagogy (Svodova & Stevenson, 2021). Journal clubs have been acknowledged as a strategy to effectively communicate best practice information among healthcare workers since 1849 (Campbell-Flemming et al., 2009). Over the past couple of decades, journal clubs have been integrated into the curriculum of nursing studies and subsequently employed in the advancement of nursing practice (Parahoo, 2014). From an educational standpoint, journal clubs proved valuable not only for nursing students but also for nursing staff and clinical educators. These strategies facilitated the adoption of the highest-quality evidence-based practice, promoted nursing research, and, indirectly through education, had the potential to bring about organizational-wide changes in nursing practices (Zarghi et al., 2012).

Virtual Journal Club

Despite being a well-established and successful teaching strategy in the medical profession, journal clubs are relatively new to nursing. Regardless of the long history of journal clubs, current research in this area remains limited (Mattila et al., 2013). Additional barriers include the challenge of finding a convenient day and time for members of the club in traditional journal clubs, where nurses physically gather to discuss an article of interest (Lehna et al., 2010). The conventional approach (face-to-face) in conducting journal clubs, involving students reading and discussing one assigned article, does not optimally foster student engagement and learning (Rodriguez & Hawley-Molloy, 2017). An alternative is to look for vJC to join (Bleich et al., 2018). Virtual Journal Clubs have the potential to enhance journal club participation by eliminating barriers like time constraints, geographical limitations, and limited local membership (Kawar et al., 2015). Educators, content experts, investigators, and learners can participate in discussions in real-time or later, depending on the platforms employed (Topf & Hiremath, 2015). Earlier researchers discovered high levels of student engagement in vJCs for both small and large courses. Each discussion held significant meaning and witnessed robust participation involving all nursing students. From a qualitative perspective, both students and instructors perceived vJCs as effective, with student comments generally expressing positivity and indicating effectiveness (Campbell et al., 2018).

Opportunities in Virtual Journal Club for Nurses

Even though more nurses reported reading the forum and opting not to post anything due to previously mentioned comments, the discussions in vJCs were productive, focusing on new information presented in the selected article (Lamar, 2016). Cutting-edge technological advances, utilizing the internet to access virtual learning environments, offer cost-effective avenues to involve nurses and alleviate barriers associated with face-to-face journal clubs, such as limited time for reading journals before or during meetings (Billingsley et al., 2013). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic presented a distinctive opportunity to extend Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) into the online clinical small-group setting, employing a cooperative learning pedagogical strategy. Hence, further research to assess the effectiveness of global-scale vJCs by international nurses for exchanging best practices in EBP is essential.

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