

MAKING THE LEAP

AN EIGHT-POINT CHECKLIST TO HELP CREATE AN EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE



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THE BENEFITS OF AN EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

The healthcare industry's shift toward value-based payment means that providers are being compensated based on the value of care they provide. Because of this there is greater incentive for providers to focus less on volume and more on the quality of care they deliver. One way providers are improving quality and managing the health of patient populations is through Evidence-Based Practice.

Evidence-Based Practice involves applying the best available evidence to clinical decision-making in order to improve patient outcomes. It can be used to develop care guidelines or direct treatment for individual patients. The following checklist guides you through steps that will help you implement Evidence-Based Practice.



1

EVALUATE YOUR PATIENT NEEDS

The Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) process starts with patient evaluation. Begin by assessing the individual or patient population that requires treatment. This may involve physical evaluation of an individual, or "on-paper" evaluation of a group of patients, for example, like the subset of your population that has diabetes. Collect and review the background information that is necessary to set up the ultimate question or problem you want to solve with a new guideline or treatment plan.



2

DEFINE A SPECIFIC QUESTION THAT YOU AIM TO ANSWER

Once you have a broad understanding of the main problem you are trying to solve, you need to narrow your focus to one specific question. You can use the PICO outline to formulate a question and ensure it is evidence driven. A well-crafted question will make it easier to quickly locate evidence in medical literature, because you'll have targeted keywords to drive your search. Develop a clinical question that identifies:

P – The Patient (Or Population) Problem. Make sure your question includes defining characteristics that explain who your patient or population is, and what they are experiencing. For example, you may want to identify a disease, symptom, age range, or anything else that describes the patient.

I – Intervention. Pinpoint the treatment you are questioning. Maybe it is a medical procedure, a medication, or a certain type of therapy, but whatever treatment or guideline you are considering should be stated directly.

C – Comparison. List the alternative you want to compare the above treatment to. For example, maybe you are researching the benefit of surgery over no treatment, or the effectiveness of a medication being given earlier rather than later. Include a comparison so your research focuses on finding the better course of action for your patient or population.

O – Outcome. Be explicit about the goal you are trying to achieve. Whether the goal is to minimize symptoms or restore full health, include the outcome you are pursuing.

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SEARCH FOR INFORMATION

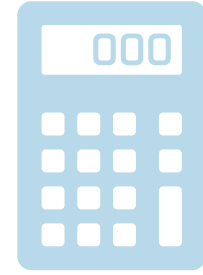
Next, search for current, trustworthy, and relevant clinical evidence to inform and guide your decision. You can research PubMed, MEDLINE, The Cochrane Library, CINAHL, or many other databases to locate medical articles and information related to your question. Each database will give you different results, so it is generally a good idea to search more than one database.



4

SELECT REPUTABLE EVIDENCE

Dissect the material you have collected to determine if what you have found is valid and helpful. This doesn't have to be a laborious process. Look for studies or articles that are based on solid research methods and avoid bias. Then dive into relevant pieces to find information that will answer your question and be applicable to your patient's problem. See if the pieces you have deemed relevant all support the same conclusion.



5

FORMULATE A SOLUTION

Turn your evidence into a solution. Combine 1) what you have learned through research, with 2) your own clinical knowledge and 3) your understanding of patient needs and preferences. Use these three things to formulate an evidence-backed answer to your question and a care guideline or a patient-specific solution.

6

APPLY THE EVIDENCE

If you have created a new evidence-based guideline to eliminate care variations and improve outcomes, you need to roll it out to clinicians and teach them how to follow the guideline. This requires a great deal of communication to ensure everyone knows exactly what they need to be doing. If your evidence-based solution is aimed at treating one specific patient, take your evidence to that patient and work to engage the individual in decision-making and involve them in treatment. Engaged patients are more likely to follow care plans, see positive outcomes and be satisfied with the quality of their care. Present the evidence and then, along with your patient, work to implement appropriate treatment.



7

MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS

After choosing a course of action, monitor the response to the treatment to see if you are achieving the expected outcomes. Document both positive and negative results. If the outcomes are not desirable you can look for ways to make adjustments so results will more closely match what you found during research. Measurement is critical to making improvements and delivering high-quality care.



8

SHARE YOUR RESULTS

The final step in the EBP process, and one that is sometimes forgotten, is to communicate the results. By sharing information you can help others understand the effectiveness of a guideline or treatment and drive population health improvements. Plus, other providers that care for your patients across the care continuum should be aware of the treatment individuals have received and the results.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Evidence-Based Practice enables you to translate empirical findings from other researchers and professionals into evidence-supported guidelines and quality care. By following the evidence-based steps above you can achieve positive outcomes and deliver value to patients.