



Journal club intervention in promoting evidence-based nursing: Perceptions of nursing students



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ABSTRACT

This study focused on nursing journal clubs as an intervention in promoting evidence-based nursing. Nursing journal clubs refer to arranged meetings where nurses convene to discuss the use of research knowledge in nursing practice. Researchers and directors of a university hospital planned the intervention. The study aimed to assess learning and utilization of research knowledge after implementation of nursing journal clubs from the perspective of nursing students. In journal clubs, answers were sought from scientific nursing articles to solve nursing problems specified by each ward/outpatient unit. Nursing students paired up to make an oral presentation of a research article to staff nurses. After the presentation, they acted as chairpersons in the discussion. The students had a vocational nursing diploma and were aiming at bachelor's degree in nursing. After the final club meeting, the students ($n = 53$) responded to a questionnaire.

The results indicated that the students were not able to utilize the studies to the same extent as they learnt from them. Age, work experience and participation in research and development activities were connected to learning. Despite limitations, the results may be used to develop nursing journal clubs as a learning and collaboration method between nurse education and health care.

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Introduction

In clinical nursing practice, research knowledge is central to the development of evidence-based nursing. In addition, decision-making in nursing requires knowledge of other sources, such as nurse's clinical experience, patient's knowledge and experience, nursing recommendations as well as resources provided by environment. The implementation of evidence-based practice requires understanding of research and evaluation of it in relation to the current practice setting (Rycroft-Malone, 2004, 2008; Rogers, 2009; Aitken et al., 2011.) Previous research has identified several factors promoting and preventing the use of research knowledge. These include teaching students to read academic texts, availability of research, allocation of time to familiarization with research at

work, participation in the work of research groups as well as support of colleagues and management (Mattila et al., 2004; Meijers et al., 2006; Leasure et al., 2011). Awareness of research evidence does not lead to its application without education or support to change practices in the work community (Alanen et al., 2009; Carlson, 2009; Jablonski and Ersek, 2009; Rogers, 2009; Corchon et al., 2011). Applying research evidence to practice is a demanding and multi-phased process. Evidence is evaluated in relation to patient's views and provision of resources. Receptiveness of the practice setting is also expected. Leadership of organization unites the scientific component with the skill component (Rycroft-Malone, 2004, 2008).

Nurses' willingness to apply research evidence to nursing is demonstrated in a study indicating that associate degree and diploma nurses' perceptions of the benefits to complete Bachelor of Nursing Science programme focused on personal and professional growth, expanded knowledge base and increased skill in caring for patients (Delaney and Piscopo, 2004).

A variety of strategies have been described to promote evidence-based practice, such as research courses, nursing rounds, workgroups, mentors and nursing journal clubs (Schira and Mateo, 1999;

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Kirchhoff, 1999; Kleinpell, 2008; Corchon et al., 2011; Aitken et al., 2011; Nesbitt, in press). As a concept, nursing journal club refers to meetings where nursing staff convene to discuss the use of research knowledge in clinical nursing practice based on a study presented to them. These meetings are organized at the workplace. By means of using research knowledge, staff members try to find solutions to a specified nursing problem. Elements of successful nursing journal clubs comprise selecting an essential and practical topic or question, setting clear objectives, naming a person responsible for the club activity and participants reading the article to be presented beforehand (Steele-Moses, 2009; Aitken et al., 2011; Ravin, 2012). By participating in journal clubs, nursing staff learns research knowledge, its evaluation and use. Journal clubs aim to evaluate whether research results may be used as a basis for decision-making in nursing to improve patients' care in their own setting. (Kirchhoff, 1999; Rogers, 2009; Aitken et al., 2011.)

Based on previous literature, it has been demonstrated that journal clubs undertaken as development projects have increased nurses and students' awareness of the studies in their own field, provided help with reading research articles, encouraged professional discussion to develop nursing and bridged the gap between research and clinical practice. These factors promoted the use of research evidence in decision-making (Goodfellow, 2004; Luby et al., 2006; Gloeckner and Robinson, 2010).

It has been demonstrated that research articles presented as learning assignments to staff nurses promoted learning of research concepts and clarified the structure of scientific articles. Students who were in the final stages of their nursing studies felt that giving oral presentations was a demanding task, because they acted as role models to nurses in the critical evaluation of the article (Mattila and Eriksson, 2007; Missal et al., 2010). Use of journal clubs as a teaching strategy in nursing education enabled learning skills to initiate professional discussion, interpretation of research results and application of results to practice (Thompson, 2006; Steenbeek et al., 2009).

Nurses found participation in journal clubs important for updating their professional knowledge base. The participants preferred articles that were central to clinical nursing practice and focused on the topics specified in the unit. Courage was needed to discuss the application of results, 'transferring' them to nursing practice. Participation in journal clubs decreased barriers between nurses, organization and communication. Some studies could not be utilized and their contribution was questioned, thus indicating learning critical evaluation of research (Fink et al., 2005; O'Nan, 2011). The beliefs of nurses in network journal club sessions were generally more positive towards evidence-based nursing than before their participation in these network-based journal clubs (Sciarra, 2011). As a teaching method, journal clubs promoted nurses' learning of research knowledge and critical examination of research methods from the perspective of clinical nursing practice (Aitken et al., 2011; Ravin, 2012). Dialogue between participants and questioning current nursing practice promoted knowledge translation at the grass-roots level, as a step towards evidence-based nursing. Nurses learnt from each other's questions and appreciated encouragement to reflect on their own experiences. (Corchon et al., 2011; Bilodeau et al., 2012; Nesbitt, in press.)

As a form of collaboration, nursing journal clubs offer nursing education and teaching hospitals a great opportunity for learning research knowledge and its utilization. However, current research on the subject is very limited.

Purpose of the study and research questions

This study forms part of a research project using nursing journal clubs in promotion of evidence-based nursing practice. It aims at

assessing learning from research knowledge and utilization of research knowledge from the perspective of nursing students. Based on the results, we wanted to develop journal clubs as a new teaching and collaboration method between nurse education and clinical practice as well as support the development of evidence-based nursing practice. The research questions were:

1. What did nursing students report to have learnt from research knowledge?
2. How did nursing students assess the utilization of research knowledge in nursing and its development?

Research methods

Planning and implementing the nursing journal club intervention

The purpose of the nursing journal club intervention was to support work units in the development of evidence-based practices. Researchers and directors of a university hospital planned the journal club intervention. It was first implemented in the units of neurology and neurosurgery as well as eye and ear units in 2007. Based on these experiences, the implementation was continued in the surgical, intensive care and medical units. The intervention was carried out in 2007–2011 (Table 1).

The units, wards and outpatient clinics interested in journal clubs specified a nursing problem or development need requiring evidence-based research to solve it. Answers were sought from research articles published in nursing science journals. These included, for example, supporting and providing patient education to patients preparing for cataract surgery, bariatric surgery patients' needs for support and education, as well as pain assessment of intensive care patients. Each topic was discussed based on various articles in several journal club meetings (cf. Titler et al., 1994; Missal et al., 2010). The work units proposed the time for the meetings. They were implemented 4–6 times per ward/outpatient

Table 1
Implementation of nursing journal clubs.

Phase	Actors	Main content
Selecting and limiting the topic	Nurse directors, ward managers, researchers	Specifying a topic related to clinical nursing practice/development need, selecting research articles for presentations
Providing resources for journal clubs, informing nurses	Nurse directors, ward managers	Reserving time for attending journal clubs during shifts, facilities, distributing the article
Preparing for journal clubs	Nurse directors, ward managers, nurses Students, researcher-teacher	Reading the article Mentoring, drawing up a power point presentation based on the article according to the phases of research process
Convening the journal clubs	Students Nurse directors, ward managers, nurses Researcher-teacher	Presenting the article and chairing the discussion afterwards Discussion based on the presentation, significance of results to clinical practice, development ideas Students' sponsor, participant in discussion
Utilizing research presented in journal clubs	Nurse directors, ward managers, nurses, researchers Students	Use of results in developing nursing practice, gaining knowledge, continuing with journal clubs Continuing with journal clubs in future work

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