Evidence-Based Practice: Academia & Practice Working Together
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Problem
The theory-practice gap is a barrier to implementing evidence based practice (EBP). This affects both academia and operations, these two must work together to meet this challenge.

Evidence
Texas Woman’s University nursing doctoral program and Presbyterian Hospital of Denton partnered through the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need grant to improve practicing nurses’ understanding of research, support the work environment with a strong foundation of evidence-based practice, and allow fellows practical experience in operations.

Strategy
Following a review of models for implementing EBP into practice, the Fellows selected the Iowa model as a framework. Recent research and best practice guidelines from the Registered Nurse Association of Ontario (RNAO) were used to support practice. During monthly educational presentations, the nursing Directors were introduced to the Iowa Model, RNAO guidelines, and methods to find and analyze published research.

Professional Practice Change
Mentoring relationships developed between the Fellows and Directors, who then mentored their staff. Staff gained interest in incorporating EBP to provide frameworks for clinical practice. This knowledge assisted in revising and creating policies and procedures hospital-wide.

Evaluation and Results
Nursing units have either developed or are in differing stages of developing guidelines, from conducting the preliminary literature search to drafting EBP guidelines.

Lessons Learned
A strong relationship based communication network between the academic and practice partners will help to establish realistic timeframes for the implementation of EBP as well as maintain tacit knowledge in the case of staff or student turnover. All core members of the partnership should complete continuing education on EBP.

Recommendations
Hospitals and nursing education programs must develop a relationship to close the theory-practice gap. Undergraduate and graduate nursing students can work with practicing nurses, teaching skills to develop and implement EBP. These partnerships can facilitate implementation of nursing research into practice, improving healthcare and patient outcomes.
Bibliography


