Research/EBP Knowledge & Experience: A Competency-Based Program
JoAnn Mick, PhD, RN
Harris County Hospital District

Problem:
To achieve Magnet recognition, organizations must demonstrate sustained growth of practice environments which integrate nursing research and evidence based practice (EBP) as essential components of decision making and care delivery. Organizations can face challenges when phobias interfere with nurses’ learning and active participation in EBP projects or research.

Evidence:
Competency self-assessment assists individual nurses to identify strengths and areas for growth with research/EBP knowledge and experience. The Great American Cookie Experiment [GACE] provides a methodology for research education and experience by engaging nurses in an informative, fun, hands-on project.

Strategy:
The GACE initiative was implemented in a county healthcare system via nurses’ participation in monthly research council meetings. Working in a group, nurses learn to write PICO questions, search literature, critique articles, develop a protocol, obtain IRB approval, collect and analyze data [study participants taste 2 cookies and complete a survey] then summarize and share findings. Nurses learn to write a funding proposal [for cookies] and an article. All nurses have opportunity to become involved in the GACE as researchers or study participants.

Practice change:
Fifty-five nurses signed commitment letters agreeing to attend monthly meetings to learn and participate in the research process.

Evaluation:
GACE members completed a baseline research/EBP competency skills assessment. Nurses self-rated research/EBP knowledge and experience using scores from 0 [no knowledge/no experience] to 4 [knowledgeable/experienced]. Nurses identify professional development goals and self-assess progress at 6 and 12 months.

Results:
Mean baseline competency scores revealed nurses self-assessed as research/EBP novices. Findings indicated nurses had basic research knowledge but little or no actual experience conducting research/EBP projects.

Recommendations:
Comparison of 6 and 12-month assessment scores with baseline results will provide evidence of growth and/or provide insight for development of strategies to grow and sustain an evidence-based practice environment.
Lessons learned:
Hands-on experience in a supportive structured program provides opportunities for nurses to overcome research concerns and acquire knowledge and skills useful to study their own practice-area interests.

Bibliography:


Hudson-Barr, D., Weeks, SK., & Watters, C. (2002). Introducing the staff nurse to nursing research through the Great American Cookie Experiment. Journal of Nursing Administration, 32(9), 440-443.
