Establishing Consensus for Evidence-Based Practice Competencies in Associate Degree Programs
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Problem/Purpose
The purpose of this project was to establish national consensus on essential competencies for evidence-based practice (EBP) to guide inclusion of EBP skills and content in Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) education programs and provide a basis for professional competencies in clinical practice.

Background/Evidence
Professional nurses are being called upon to provide care that is evidence-based (IOM, 2001). In order to fulfill this professional role, the urgent need to develop a consensus of EBP nursing competencies was identified and the first national consensus on competencies for EBP in nursing (Stevens, 2005) was developed by the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Academic Center for Evidence-Based Practice (ACE) using a national consensus-forming expert panel. The panel established EBP competencies for the baccalaureate, masters and doctoral levels of education in nursing. However, to date, the statements have not been extrapolated to ADN competencies. Acknowledging that the majority of the nurse workforce is ADN-prepared the need is urgent. There is a large gap in preparation of the nursing workforce in both education and professional development programs.

Strategy
A Delphi consensus building approach was used to address the research question. A content analysis approach as well as a consensus-forming expert panel approach was used to identify, verify, and gain consensus on statements of EBP competencies for ADN education programs. Multiple iterations were used to identify competencies and to establish national consensus for essential competencies for ADN education programs.

Evaluation/Results
Descriptive statistics and content analysis were used to analyze the survey and roundtable discussion. The roundtable panel proposed 10 EBP competencies for the ADN level.

Recommendations/Implications
Professional nurses are being called upon to provide care that is evidence-based (IOM, 2001). There is a large gap between basic preparation and current workforce needs; this affects basic education and professional development programs. Incorporating EBP competencies in ADN education programs will help prepare the future nursing workforce by identifying EBP competencies faculty will incorporate into the educational curriculum and needed basic EBP skills used in clinical practice.

Funded in part by a grant from the Delta Alpha Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.