The EBP Fellowship Program: Promoting EBP among Direct Care Nurses
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Problem: Engaging direct care nurses in research and evidence-based nursing practice (EBNP) is challenging because they lack essential knowledge and time for project development.

Evidence: A survey of our nurses’ research knowledge, attitudes, and practices showed nurses wanted to participate in EBNP and research but had low levels of knowledge and ability to perform. A literature search revealed successful strategies used elsewhere.

Strategy: An Evidence-Based Nursing Practice Fellowship (EBNPF) was developed to provide nurses with education, mentorship, and compensated time to develop EBNP projects or research proposals. Sixty class hours and time for independent work was offered during 12 8-hr days over 8 months. Seven themes guided curriculum development. The Research and Education Council developed marketing materials and application criteria, reviewed applications and evaluations, and made recommendation on curriculum delivered by the Director of Nursing Research, affiliate faculty and clinical nurse specialists.

Practice Change: 2010 Fellows developed 12 EBP initiatives and 4 research studies. 2011 Fellows developed 13 EBP projects. Nurses on 19 units have participated. Project examples are: Sucrose for Infant Procedural Pain and Oral Care for Patients at Risk for VAP. Study topics include Compassion Fatigue and Parental Satisfaction with Pre-Operative Assessment and Education.

Evaluation: Pre- and post-program evaluation uses the Nurses Research Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices Tool (KAP) and items based on Essential Competencies for EBP in Nursing. Additional formative and summative evaluation tools are used.

Results: Knowledge scores increased over 60%, ability to perform increased 36%, and competency increased 39% each year. Fellows cited relevance, great learning, and feeling privileged to participate. All provided oral and poster presentations of their projects internally and some, externally. Fellows’ endorsements of the EBNPF led to increased applications in 2012. Fellowship activities bolster applications for clinical advancement.

Recommendations: Expand number of Fellows in program; increase post Fellowship support for project completion.

Lessons Learned: Investment in motivated nurses increases nurses’ practice based on current evidence and peer resources for EBP.
Bibliography:
Stevens, K. R. (2005) Essential Competencies for Evidence-Based Practice in Nursing. San Antonio, TX: Academic Center for Evidence-Based Practice, UTHSCSA.