

EDITORIAL

EBP e-Toolkit Project: Providing a Teaching and Learning Open and Innovative toolkit for Evidence-Based Practice to Nursing European Curriculum

Healthcare systems are constantly evolving and becoming more complex. This requires more competent professionals equipped with the knowledge and skills that allow them to choose the best option for patient care. Evidence-based Practice (EBP) is a problem-solving approach to clinical decision-making that integrates the best available scientific evidence with clinical experience and patients' preferences and values (Sackett et al., 1996). EBP is an instrument of great utility in making clinical decisions in nursing care, helping to reduce healthcare costs and variability in clinical practice. In addition, it improves the quality of nursing care practice and patient health outcomes, and increases the satisfaction of nursing professionals (Melnik et al., 2012).

Undergraduate and postgraduate curricula for nurses and midwives should provide EBP competencies in order to enhance the ability of nurses and midwives to apply evidence-based clinical practice. International organizations recognize this necessity. The European Federation of Nurses Associations has developed a Competency Framework (CF) based on European Directive 2013/55/EU which establishes the educational requirements for nurses responsible for general care, a core competence of which is "to implement scientific findings for Evidence-based Practice" (European Federation of Nurses Associations, 2015). Moreover, the importance of education in EBP is recognised by the WHO in its technical guide for Member States: European Strategic Directions for Strengthening Nursing and Midwifery towards Health 2020 Goals (WHO, 2015). Nevertheless, the incorporation of EBP into clinical nursing has been slow and remains a challenge for the profession. Available evidence indicates that lack of knowledge, confidence in teaching EBP, information, literacy skills, time, resources, frameworks for curricula, and support are all barriers experienced by nurse educators (Saunders, Vehviläinen-Julkunen, 2016). At present, only limited resources are available to support EBP teaching in European Nursing Curricula.

In this context, the EBP e-Toolkit Project is a Strategic Partnership of six European higher education institutions in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme: the University of Murcia (Spain), the Technological Educational Institute of Crete (Greece), the University of Modena e Reggio Emilia (Italy), the University of Ostrava (Czech Republic), the Medical University of Warsaw (Poland), and the Angela Boskin Faculty of Health Care (Slovenia). The project is to be carried out over three years and the Consortium seeks to promote and harmonize the teaching and learning of Evidence Based Practice in the European nursing curricula. The objective is to promote the acquisition of EBP competences earlier in professional careers, which can then be continued for lifelong self-directed learning, including for nurse educators and clinical mentors. To achieve this goal, the partner institutions of this project are analyzing the current situation of EBP in European nursing curricula in order to agree on a European EBP competency framework, and to develop guidelines on recommendations for the teaching and learning of EBP in the European nursing curriculum.

According to the recommendations of this preliminary work we plan to develop an EBP e-Toolkit that will include an e-course and an open electronic resources library with a pedagogical strategy for the learning and training of EBP in nursing, oriented at undergraduate nursing students and professional nurses. We will validate the innovative educational intervention using the EBP e-Toolkit among nursing students and nurse educators (academic and clinical mentors). The EBP e-Toolkit will be culturally adapted and made available in different languages. Finally, the Consortium involved in the project will establish a European Nursing Centre for Learning Evidence-Based Practice (ENCLEBP), to guarantee the dissemination and sustainability of the project, and to facilitate and improve transnational academic cooperation between European countries and non-European countries.

We invite all the educative institutions, professional associations, healthcare systems, nurses and midwives, students or professionals, to follow the progress of this exciting project by visiting www.europeannursingebp.eu, to get to grips with the EPB e-Toolkit, and to enjoy learning about EBP.

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