

## Purpose and procedure

The general purpose of *Evidence-Based Nursing* is to select from the health-related literature\* those articles reporting studies and reviews that warrant immediate attention by nurses attempting to keep pace with important advances in their profession. These articles are described, critiqued and commented on by nurses and other health professionals. The specific purposes of *Evidence-Based Nursing* are:

- to identify, using predefined criteria, the best quantitative and qualitative original and review articles on the meaning, cause, course, assessment, prevention, treatment, or economics of health problems managed by nurses and on quality improvement
- to provide a description and expert commentary on the context of each article, its methods, and the clinical applications that its findings warrant
- to disseminate the summaries in a timely fashion to nurses

The RCN Publishing Company Limited and the BMJ Publishing Group publish *Evidence-Based Nursing*.

### Criteria for selection and review of articles for abstracting

All articles in a journal issue are considered for inclusion if, based on their abstracts, they meet the following basic and category-specific criteria:

#### Basic criteria

- original or review articles
- in English
- quantitative and qualitative studies
- about topics that are important to the clinical practice of nurses in any setting
- analysis of data consistent with the study question

#### Category-specific criteria (quantitative studies)

*Studies of prevention or treatment must also include:*

- random allocation of participants to comparison groups
- outcome measures of known or probable clinical importance

*Studies of assessment (screening or diagnosis) must also include:*

- a spectrum of participants, some (but not all) of whom have the condition of interest
- an objective diagnostic (gold) standard (eg, central venous pressure) or current clinical standard for diagnosis (eg, sphygmomanometer reading for hypertension), preferably with documentation of reproducible criteria for subjectively interpreted diagnostic standard (ie, report of statistically significant measure of agreement beyond chance among observers)

*Studies of prognosis must also include:*

- an inception cohort (first onset or assembled at a uniform point in the development of a condition or disease) of individuals, all initially free of the outcome of interest

*Studies of causation must also include:*

- observations of the relation between modifiable exposures and putative clinical outcomes
- clearly identified comparison group(s) for those at risk of, or having, the outcome of interest (ie, randomised controlled trials, quasi-randomised controlled trials, non-randomised controlled trials, cohort studies with case by case matching or statistical adjustment to create comparable

groups, or nested case-control studies) and preferably prospective data collection

*Studies of quality improvement or continuing education must also include:*

- random allocation of participants or units to comparison groups
- outcome measures of known or probable clinical importance

*Studies of the economics of healthcare interventions must include:*

- an economic question comparing alternative courses of action
- comparison of alternative diagnostic or therapeutic services or quality improvement activities on the basis of both the outcomes produced (effectiveness) and resources consumed (costs)
- evidence of effectiveness from a study (or studies) of real (not hypothetical) patients, which meet(s) the criteria for treatment, assessment, quality improvement, or a systematic review article
- results presented in terms of the incremental or additional costs and outcomes of one intervention over another

*Clinical prediction guides must also include:*

- generation of the guide in  $\geq 1$  set of patients (training or derivation set)
- validation of the guide in an independent set of patients (test or validation set)

*Systematic review articles must also include:*

- a clear statement of the clinical topic being reviewed
- a clear description of the sources and methods for identifying articles
- specification of the inclusion and exclusion criteria for selecting articles for detailed review
- $\geq 1$  article in the review that meets the above noted criteria for treatment, assessment, prognosis, causation, quality improvement, economics, or clinical prediction guides

#### Qualitative studies

- content reflects the phenomenon of interest from the perspective of people experiencing it
- data collection methods are appropriate for qualitative data
- analyses are appropriate for qualitative data

These criteria are subject to modification if, for example, it becomes feasible to apply higher standards that increase the validity and applicability of studies for clinical practice. The objective of Evidence-Based Nursing is to abstract only the very best literature, consistent with a reasonable number of articles "making it through the filter."

Articles meeting the criteria set out above and chosen for coverage in Evidence-Based Nursing are described and reviewed by an expert in the content area covered by the article. This expert writes a commentary in which she or he describes the article and compares the study findings to previous research findings, identifies any important methodological problems that affect interpretation of the study results, and offers recommendations for clinical application.

#### \* Journals currently reviewed

Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica  
Addiction  
Age and Ageing  
American Journal of Gastroenterology  
American Journal of Medicine  
American Journal of Psychiatry  
Annals of Emergency Medicine  
Annals of Internal Medicine

Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases  
 Annals of Surgery  
 ANS Advances in Nursing Sciences  
 Applied Nursing Research  
 Archives of Disease in Childhood Neonatal and Fetal  
 Archives of General Psychiatry  
 Archives of Internal Medicine  
 Archives of Neurology  
 Archives of Paediatric and Adolescent Medicine  
 Arthritis and Rheumatism  
 Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry  
 Behaviour Research and Therapy  
 Birth  
 BJOG  
 BMC Psychiatry  
 BMJ  
 British Journal of Clinical Psychology  
 British Journal of General Practice  
 British Journal of Psychiatry  
 British Journal of Surgery  
 Canadian Journal of Gastroenterology  
 Canadian Journal of Infection Control  
 Canadian Journal of Psychiatry  
 Canadian Respiratory Journal  
 Circulation  
 CMAJ  
 Cochrane Database of Systematic Review  
 Critical Care Medicine  
 Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology  
 Diabetes Care  
 Diabetic Medicine  
 Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry  
 Evid Rep Technol Assess (Full Rep)  
 Gastroenterology  
 Gut  
 Health Education and Behavior  
 Health Psychology  
 Health technology assessment reports  
 Heart  
 Journal of Nursing Scholarship  
 International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry  
 JAMA  
 Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology  
 Journal of Advanced Nursing  
 Journal of Affective Disorders  
 Journal of Anxiety Disorders  
 Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry  
 and Allied Disciplines  
 Journal of Clinical Epidemiology  
 Journal of Clinical Nursing  
 Journal of Clinical Psychiatry  
 Journal of Clinical Psychopharmacology  
 Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology  
 Journal of Family Practice  
 Journal of Infectious Disease  
 Journal of Manipulative and Physical Therapy  
 Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry  
 Journal of Paediatrics  
 Journal of Psychosomatic Research  
 Journal of the American Academy of Child  
 and Adolescent Psychiatry  
 Journal of the American Geriatrics Society  
 Journal of Vascular Surgery  
 Lancet  
 Medical Care  
 Medical Journal of Australia  
 Medicine  
 Midwifery  
 Molecular Psychiatry  
 Neurology  
 New England Journal of Medicine  
 Pain  
 Paediatrics  
 PLOS Medicine  
 Psychiatric Services  
 Psychological Medicine  
 Psychosomatic Medicine  
 Qualitative Health Research  
 Rheumatology  
 Schizophrenia Bulletin  
 Schizophrenia Research  
 Social Science and Medicine  
 Spine  
 Stroke  
 Thorax  
 Western Journal of Nursing Research