

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 summarised in "value added" abstracts and commented on by clinical experts. 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, diagnosis, prevention, treatment, or economics of health problems managed by nurses and on quality assurance and continuing professional development
- To summarise this literature in the form of "structured abstracts" that describe the objectives, methods, results, and evidence-based conclusions of studies in a reproducible and accurate fashion
- To provide brief, highly expert comment on the context of each article, its methods, and clinical applications that its findings warrant
- To disseminate the summaries in a timely fashion to nurses.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Publishing Company and the BMJ Publishing Group publish *Evidence-Based Nursing* under the editorship of Dr Alba DiCenso and Dr Donna Ciliska at McMaster University in Canada and Dr Nicky Cullum at the University of York in the UK. The Health Information Research Unit (HIRU) of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics at McMaster University hosts the editorial office for the production of the abstracts and commissioning of commentaries. Dr Brian Haynes acts as coordinating editor to ensure that methods and procedures are consistent with other evidence-based journals prepared by HIRU.

Criteria for selection and review of articles for abstracting

All articles in a journal issue are considered for abstracting if they meet these criteria:

BASIC CRITERIA

- Original or review articles
- In English
- Quantitative or qualitative studies
- About individuals of all age groups
- About topics that are important to the clinical practice of nurses in all settings.

QUANTITATIVE STUDIES

Studies of prevention or treatment must meet these additional criteria:

- Use of most rigorous study design to appropriately address the question
- Follow up (end point assessment) of at least 80% of those entering the investigation
- Outcome measure of known or probable clinical importance
- Analysis consistent with study design.

Studies of diagnosis must meet these additional criteria:

- Clearly identified comparison groups, at least one of which is free of the disorder or condition
- Interpretation of diagnostic standard without knowledge of test result
- Interpretation of test without knowledge of diagnostic standard result
- 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 among observers)
- Analysis consistent with study design.

Studies of prognosis must meet these additional criteria:

- All study participants initially free of the outcome of interest
- Follow up of at least 80% of participants until the occurrence of a major study end point or to the end of the study
- Analysis consistent with study design.

Studies of causation must meet these additional criteria:

- Clearly identified comparison group for those at risk of, or having, the outcome of interest (ie, randomised, quasi randomised, or non-randomised controlled trial; cohort analytic study with case by case matching or statistical adjustment to create comparable groups; case control study)
- Blinding of observers of outcome to exposure (criterion assumed to be met if outcome is objective, eg, all cause mortality, self administered psychometric test)
- Blinding of observers of exposure to outcomes for case control studies or blinding of subjects to exposure for all other study designs
- Analysis consistent with study design.

Studies of quality assurance and continuing education must meet these additional criteria:

- Use of most rigorous study design to appropriately address question
- Follow up of at least 80% of participants
- Outcome measure of known or probable clinical or educational importance
- Analysis consistent with study design.

Studies of the economics of health care programmes or interventions must meet these additional criteria:

- The economic question must compare alternative courses of action
- Alternative diagnostic or therapeutic services or quality assurance activities must be compared on the basis of both the outcomes produced (effectiveness) and resources consumed (costs)
- Evidence of effectiveness must be from a study (or studies) that meets the criteria for treatment, diagnosis, quality assurance, or a review article

- Results should be presented in terms of the incremental or additional costs and outcomes of one intervention over another
- Where there is uncertainty in the estimates or imprecision in the measurement, a sensitivity analysis should be done.

- Information gathering and analysis appropriate
- Data interpretation and conclusions consistent with data analysis.

Review articles must meet these additional criteria:

- 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
- At least 1 article in the review must meet the above noted criteria for treatment, diagnosis, prognosis, causation, quality improvement, or economics of health care programmes.

These criteria are subject to modification if, for example, it is found 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 are abstracted according to the procedure for more informative abstracts,¹ with these modifications: abstracts can be up to 425 words in length; and each abstract is reviewed by an expert in the content area covered by the article. This expert writes a commentary in which she or he 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. The author of the article is given an opportunity to review the abstract and commentary before publication.

QUALITATIVE STUDIES

- Research topic or question specified
- Appropriate research design to address question
- Research method described and substantiated
- Study participants and context described

1 Haynes RB, Mulrow CD, Huth EJ, *et al.* More informative abstracts revisited. *Ann Intern Med* 1990;113:69–76.

Journals reviewed for this issue

AAOHN J	Can J Cardiovasc Nurs	J Am Board Fam Pract	Med J Aust
Acta Obstet Gynecol Scand	Can J Nurs Adm	J Am Coll Cardiol	Midwifery
Age Ageing	Can J Nurs Res	J Am Coll Surg	Mod Midwife
Am J Cardiol	Can J Public Health	J Am Geriatr Soc	N Engl J Med
Am J Crit Care	Can Med Assoc J	J Appl Gerontol	Neonatal Netw
Am J Epidemiol	Can Nurse	J Cardiovasc Nurs	Neurology
Am J Gastroenterol	Can Oncol Nurs J	J Christ Nurs	Nurs Adm Q
Am J Hosp Palliat Care	Can Oper Room Nurs J	J Clin Epidemiol	Nurs Clin North Am
Am J Infect Control	Cancer Nurs	J Contin Educ Nurs	Nurs Econ
Am J Med	Cardiovasc Nurs	J Emerg Nurs	Nurs Educ Today
Am J Nurs	Chest	J Epidemiol	Nurs Forum
Am J Obstet Gynecol	Circulation	Community Health	Nurs Manage
Am J Psychiatry	Clin Invest Med	J Fam Pract	Nurs Outlook
Am J Public Health	Clin Nurs Res	J Family Nursing	Nurs Res
Am J Respir Crit Care Med	Clin Nurs Spec	J Gen Intern Med	Nurs Sci
Am J Surg	Clin Pediatr	J Gerontol Nurs	Nurs Stand
Anaesthesia	Cochrane Library	J Infect Dis	Nurse Pract
Ann Emerg Med	Comput Nurs	J Intern Med	Nursing 97
Ann Intern Med	Crit Care Med	J Intraven Nurs	Obstet Gynecol
Ann Med	Crit Care Nurs Clin North Am	J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry	Oncol Nurs Forum
Ann Surg	Crit Care Nurs Q	J Nurs Adm	Orthop Nurs
ANS Adv Nurs Sci	Diabetes Care	J Nurs Care Qual	Pain
AORN J	Dimen Crit Care Nurs	J Nurs Educ	Patient Educ Couns
Appl Nurs Res	Eur J Cancer	J Nurs Staff Dev	Pediatr Nurs
Arch Dis Child	Fam Plann Perspect	J Nurse Midwifery	Pediatrics
Arch Fam Med	Fertil Steril	J Obstet Gynecol Neonatal Nurs	Perspect Psychiatr Care
Arch Gen Psychiatry	Gastroenterol Nurs	J Pain Symptom Manage	Perspectives
Arch Intern Med	Gastroenterology	J Pediatr	Prof Nurse
Arch Neurol	Geriatr Nurs	J Pediatr Nurs	Public Health Nurs
Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med	Gut	J Pediatr Oncol Nurs	Qual Health Care
Arch Surg	Health Educ Behav	J Perinat Neonatal Nurs	Qual Health Res
Arthritis Rheum	Heart	J Pract Nurs	Res Aging
Aust J Adv Nurs	Heart Lung	J Prof Nurs	Res Nurs Health
Birth	Hematol Oncol Clin North Am	J Psychosoc Nurs Ment Health Serv	Semin Oncol Nurs
BMJ	Holist Nurs Pract	J Vasc Surg	Social Health Illn
Br J Gen Pract	Home Healthc Nurse	J Wound Ostomy Continence Nurs	Spine
Br J Midwifery	Hypertension	JAMA	Stroke
Br J Obstet Gynaecol	Image J Nurs Sch	Lancet	Surgery
Br J Psychiatry	Int J Nurs Stud	MCN Am J Matern Child Nurs	Thorax
Br J Rheumatol	Issues Ment Health Nurs	Med Care	West J Nurs Res
Br J Surg	J Adv Nurs		
	J Aging Health		