



Cross-sectional study

Research utilisation and critical thinking among newly graduated nurses – predictors for research use: a quantitative cross-sectional study

Joanne Profetto-McGrath, Christy Raymond-Seniuk

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Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

Correspondence to:

Joanne Profetto-McGrath
Faculty of Nursing, Level 3 ECHA
11405-87th Ave, UofA,
Edmonton, AB, T6G 1C9 Canada;
joanne.profetto-mcgrath@ualberta.ca

Implications for practice and research

- This study underscores the importance of fostering new graduate nurses' critical thinking dispositions (CTD) as possible predictors of research use in practice.
- Emphasising new graduates' CTD in nursing education may also increase research use as defined in the Research Use Questionnaire (RUQ).
- Use of multivariate analysis in this study highlights a need for complex ways of examining predictors of research use.
- Further research to confirm possible predictors of research use is needed.

Context

There is a significant and growing interest in understanding how knowledge, and more specifically research evidence, is applied to nursing practice.¹ 'Research utilisation is, at its simplest, the use of research to guide practice, and is particularly concerned with the use of research evidence – that is, the findings of scientific studies' (2009).² Nurses are the largest group of healthcare providers; therefore the application of appropriate and applicable research evidence to nursing care has the potential to significantly enhance/improve patient outcomes.³ Wangenstein, *et al* (2011) studied the CTD and research use of newly graduate nurses in Norway. Data were collected over 6 months in 2006–2007.

Methods

The authors used a quantitative cross-sectional design that conveniently sampled Norwegian new graduate nurses to explore whether CTD were significant predictors of their research use in practice. Using a demographic survey, the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI), and a translated RUQ, they collected data from 617 graduates of 18 university colleges. Data analysis included descriptive statistics and multiple and simple linear regression (forward method) in this study.

Findings

Despite respondents' positive attitudes towards research use, this attitude did not translate into strong research use in their practice. CTD explained 20% of the variance of research use in practice as measured by the RUQ. More specifically, 20% of respondents' attitude towards research use and 11% of their self-reported research use in practice was explained by participants' CCTDI total mean score. The RUQ category of 'availability and support to implement research' was also a strong predictor of overall research use.

Commentary

This study used a common research design to study variables that have been relatively ignored in new graduate nurses. Although a commonly used design to explore research utilisation of various participant groups,⁴ it does not account for the complex intricacies and associations that are commonly linked with research use. A clearer account of contextual factors being studied would have added clarity. The RUQ has been reliable in other studies and measures indirect and direct research use; however, it does not explain instrumental, conceptual, persuasive and overall research use described by Estabrooks⁵ and commonly discussed in other studies.⁶ The use of multivariate statistical methods with this sample added to the frequently used bivariate correlational analysis found in the literature. Inclusion of p values would strengthen claims of significance in this study. Although multicollinearity was tested in this study, a discussion of specific values would aid in evaluating the results. Despite the significant variance in research use explained by participants' overall CTD scores, a large portion of variance is not explained and requires further study. Another interesting finding was the lower than optimal truth seeking scores, which has also been reported in other studies⁴ examining CTD in nursing. Barriers to research use were also briefly discussed but not fully elaborated. Barriers to research use are needed to understand why nurses have positive attitudes towards research but do not commonly use research to inform their practice.⁷ Elaboration of this study's implications would facilitate readers' application of study findings. Although the findings increase our understanding of new graduate nurses' CTD and research use; we need to be cautious in generalising to other groups.

Competing interests None.

References

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