

Problem & Purpose

Nursing practice and healthcare delivery are continually evolving; to sustain excellence in care, nurses must remain informed of current evidence-based practices. However, many nurses lack formal training in research appraisal, limiting their ability to critically evaluate literature and apply findings at the bedside. This gap may hinder the consistent delivery of high-quality, evidence-based care.

To support ongoing professional development, we implemented a unit-based journal club that empowers nurses to critically analyze research, identify unit-specific practice gaps, and implement evidence-based changes aligned with current clinical guidelines.

Available Knowledge & Rationale

Journal clubs are a proven strategy for helping nurses bridge the gap between research and clinical practice. They create a structured, supportive environment where nurses can learn to critically evaluate research and gain confidence in applying findings. Our unit-based journal club provides this safe and practical space for staff to strengthen their evidence-based practice (EBP) skills, especially within a population of older adult patients.

Methods

- Context
 - Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital, Acute Care for the Elders (ACE) Unit

Methods (cont.)

- Intervention
 - Using the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) methodology, we created a journal club tailored to our unit, which primarily serves older adults (65+)
 - Launched a monthly journal club (virtual & in-person) open to all disciplines
 - Article selection criteria: published within the past 3–5 years and relevant to patient population or nursing practice
 - Topics aligned with unit-specific challenges identified by staff
 - Used the IOWA Model as the standardized research appraisal tool
 - Created a dedicated website for article access and club resources
- Study of Intervention
 - Tracked staff participation and attendance
 - Observed changes in confidence and proficiency in analyzing articles
 - Monitored for unit practice changes or initiatives resulting from journal club discussions

Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative measures including:

- Attendance records
- Staff self-reports of confidence and research literacy
- Implementation of initiatives derived from literature review and research findings

Results

- Increased staff participation across shifts and inclusion of interdisciplinary colleagues
- Implemented unit initiatives:
 - Music therapy for patients
 - “Walking Time” mobility promotion program
 - Continuation and expansion of ACE activities
- Improved staff confidence and proficiency using the IOWA model for critical appraisal

Discussion

The ACE Unit Journal Club has successfully cultivated a stronger evidence-based culture on our unit. Staff are more engaged with current research and empowered to advocate for practice improvements. The IOWA Model has proven to be a user-friendly and effective tool, particularly for nurses with limited research experience.

Conclusions

Our ACE Unit Journal Club has enhanced professional development and improved unit-based practices. The club’s success demonstrates how frontline nurses, when equipped with tools and support, can drive meaningful change in patient care.

References

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- Valizadeh, L., Zamanzadeh, V., Alizadeh, S., & Namadi Vosoughi, M.(2022). Promoting evidence-based nursing through journal clubs: An integrative review. *Journal of research in nursing*, 27(7), 606–620. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17449871211022799>

