

# Basics of Nursing Research—Role of Research in Nursing

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The development of nursing knowledge through research is important for improving quality of care. In the last couple of decades, there has been an emphasis on evidence-based practice.

Evidence is discovered through research. Evidence-based practice is the use of the best clinical evidence in making patient care decisions. This means that nursing practice should be driven by research. The United Health Foundation believes that evidence-based practice is so crucial to healthcare workers that it publishes a free resource, Clinical Evidence (Concise), every quarter.

This resource can be requested from: BMJ Clinical Evidence (<http://www.clinicalevidence.com/>)

In Houser, 2015, evidence-based practice is important in nursing practice because research has shown:

1. Patient outcomes are better.
2. Nursing care is more efficient when ineffective processes are replaced.
3. Errors in decision-making become less frequent.
4. Consumers want evidence-based information to make decisions.

Apart from these, there are other reasons why research is important.

The rising cost of health care is one. There is a great need for nursing research that documents the effectiveness of nursing practice and the need for nursing in general. This documentation is needed not only for nurses, but also for showing nursing care consumers (patients), health care administrators, insurance companies, and government agencies the value of nursing and the nursing profession.

**For example**, research that shows that patients' quality of care increases with a decrease in the patients' length of stay and with a nurse to patient ratio of 1:5 will be interesting to insurance companies that pay for patient care.

Official ANA Position Statements

(<http://nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/HealthcareandPolicyIssues/ANAPositionStatements.aspx>)

At the Bachelor of Science level, nurses are expected to identify clinical problems requiring investigation, assist experienced investigators, gain access to clinical sites, influence the selection of appropriate methods of data collection, collect data, and implement nursing research findings (ANA, n.d.).

Nurses who work in a clinical setting where research is being conducting are expected to follow the research protocols. In fact, it is often the nurse's responsibility to make sure that protocols are followed by the rest of the staff.

**For example**, an oncology nurse working in a university setting may be administering chemotherapy to a patient who is participating in a clinical trial. It is imperative that the nurse follows the protocol so that the data collected from this patient does not skew the study.

At the very least, nurses are expected to participate in research by being consumers of nursing research. Consumers of research know the value of nursing research and improve their clinical practice by reading and critiquing research studies. Research related activities may include:

1. Participating in a journal club in the practice setting with regular meetings among nurses or the multidisciplinary team to discuss and critique research studies.
2. Attending research presentations at conferences, dinners, and so forth.
3. Discussing research findings and their importance with patients, giving them information and advice about participating in studies.
4. Assisting in the collection of data.
5. Reviewing a proposed research plan and offering suggestions for improvement based on clinical experience.
6. Assisting in the development of a research project.
7. Evaluating research findings for usefulness in practice and applying the findings to practice as appropriate.

The role of nursing is ever increasing. We rely on Nursing Research to identify problems, to find solutions, to validate old methods and form new ones, to study occurrences and understand them, and much more.