

A Clinical Librarian–Nursing Partnership to Bridge Clinical Practice and Research in an Oncology Setting

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Nurses in clinical settings in which evidence-based, individualized care is expected are often the best resource to identify important clinical questions and gaps in practice. These nurses are frequently challenged by a lack of resources to fully develop their questions and identify the most appropriate methods to answer them. A strategic and ongoing partnership between medical library services and nursing can support nurses as they embark on the process of answering these questions and, ultimately, improving patient care and clinical outcomes.

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Nurses today work in practice settings where the expectation is to “draw upon the best evidence to provide the care most appropriate to each patient” (Olsen, Goolsby, & McGinnis, 2009, p. 10) while caring for patients with high acuity in highly specialized settings. Within the nursing profession, the Magnet Recognition Program® advocates for exemplary professional practice and the generation of new knowledge through research and clinical innovation. Nurses working in a clinical setting are often the best resource to identify important clinical questions and gaps in practice, but a lack of resources presents challenges to nurses in fully developing their questions and identifying the most appropriate methods to answer them. These challenges often fall into three broad categories: individual nurse characteristics, organizational characteristics, and environmental characteristics (Dobbins, Ciliska, Cockerill, Barnsley, & DiCenso, 2002). Creating a dedicated partnership between nurses and library staff is one method that can overcome these challenges to use existing resources and support nurses who are asking and answering important clinical questions (DePalma, 2005; Vrabel, 2005).

Research in the Literature

Nurses are interested in research and understand the benefit to their

professional growth and clinical practice. A survey of 794 nurses found that 94% (n = 750) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “research helps build a scientific base for nursing,” and 96% (n = 763) said they believe that research is needed to improve nursing practice (Yoder et al., 2014). A survey of 375 nurses at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) in New York revealed that participants strongly valued research, with 96% (n = 360) responding that research findings should guide practice and 99% (n = 371) noting that engaging in research contributes to their professional growth (Ginex, 2013). In addition, the survey results indicated that organizational support for research was insufficient; 64% (n = 240) of participants stated that qualified mentors were not available, and 78% (n = 293) detailed that time was not provided during the workday for research projects (Ginex, 2013). In the Yoder et al. (2014) study, 58% (n = 457) of participants responded that nursing administration was moderately or extremely supportive of research, whereas 50% (n = 395) said that general administration was similarly supportive. Sixty-three percent (n = 236) of nurses in the Ginex (2013) study responded that they would be interested in doing a research or evidence-based practice (EBP) project, but only 50% (n = 188) said they felt supported to participate in this endeavor.