Critical thinking:

How is tradition/authority/trial and error/ scientific research displayed on your unit/ within your specialty as a source of your nursing knowledge.

I work on an inpatient psychiatric unit. A tradition on the unit has always been that when a patient appears anxious or reports increased anxieties they must be medicated with an anti-anxiety medication in order to prevent escalating behaviors. There was never any talk about using alternative treatments to prevent or decrease a patient’s anxiety.

The authority belonged to the physician who ordered the prn anxiety medications with the expectation that the nurse would administer the medication when the patient exhibited or reported increased anxiety.

However, the unit I now work on has begun using a different method of decreasing anxiety without medicating the patient. Nurses are now encouraging and teaching patients to use deep breathing relaxation or a mindfulness skill to decrease anxiety. The goal is to teach patients skills to decrease anxiety, without medications, that they can use at home, at work, or just out in public.

Through trial and error nursing has learned that coping skills, dialectical behavioral skills (DBT), can work and patient’s can learn the skills necessary to decrease anxiety. Nurses have also learned that it is not 100% full proof and there are times when the traditional method of giving an anti-anxiety medication is appropriate.

Is there another way of ‘knowing’ this nursing function?

I would have to say the knowing came from the social workers on the unit. They first began using dialectical behaviors skills in teaching patients how to cope with stress. It was only a matter of time before the knowledge spread to the nurses. It has spread to the point that nursing now teaches the mental health associates (MHA’s) the correct use of DBT skills.

Do you agree with the reasoning behind (e.g. ‘tradition) to that specific nursing function?

I do believe there is a place for the tradition of giving prn anti-anxiety medications but more as an adjunct to the skills being taught. Also, there are some patients who cannot learn until their anxiety is brought under control. These patients respond better to the combination of anti-anxiety medication and coping skills with the idea that the medication will gradually be tapered off as the skills improve.

It is awesome to actually have such a therapeutic team working together for the long term benefit of the patients.
What do you need to know about research to apply evidence based practice?

There is so much I need to know. For starters I need to know how and where to find reliable information; how to recognize inaccurate research from accurate research; and how to interpret or understand what I am reading. From there I need to know how to incorporate what I have learned into my nursing practice.

I still recall looking for information regarding correlations between Autism and vaccinations in order to decrease my daughter-in-laws fears about childhood vaccinations. I was actually looking at research that was later proved to be false. I had not used the information in my research; don’t know why other than it didn’t sound right. However, I spent a lot of time trying to make sense of the false research.

What does the term nursing research mean?

The word research means ‘to search again’ or ‘to examine carefully’ (Burns & Grove, 2011, p.4). Nursing research involves looking at current knowledge and determining its value today and ways to “improve clinical practice” (Ibid).

“In summary, nursing research is a scientific process that validates and refines existing knowledge and generates new knowledge that directly and indirectly influences nursing practice” (Ibid).

Works Cited

Why do nurses research?

According to Burns and Grove, 2011 “…nurses need a solid research base to implement and document the effectiveness of selected nursing interventions in treating a particular patient problems and promoting positive patient and family outcomes” (p.6). Nursing research allows nurses to find, use, and provide quality healthcare to the public at a reasonable cost.

Works Cited
What are the goals to taking an undergraduate nursing research course?

The goal of taking an undergraduate nursing research course is to learn to interpret nursing research and to put this knowledge into clinical practice.

What do you hope to achieve at the end of this course?

At the end of this course I hope to achieve the knowledge to find credible research; be able to interpret the research; and to use the knowledge in my clinical practice to improve the quality of patient care at a reasonable cost.