

# **Evidence-Based Clinical Practice in Nursing and Health Care**

*Assimilating research, experience  
and expertise*

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# Preface

Evidence-based health care (EBHC) is widely promoted internationally and is now a fundamental component of health planning, health services funding and the education of undergraduate and postgraduate health professionals in most countries. In medicine, nursing and the allied health professions, the Cochrane Collaboration approach to EBHC (focusing on evidence of effectiveness through the meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials) is well accepted. However, as useful as it is, this emphasis on evidence of effectiveness is recognised as a limitation by an increasing number of clinicians because it does not adequately take account of the broader interest of health-care professions in the human condition and human experience.

Most current texts on EBHC concentrate largely on effectiveness and on the 'Cochrane' approach to what constitutes usable evidence. There are, however, emerging alternatives and this book has as its organising framework the Joanna Briggs Institute Model of Evidence-Based Health Care. This model, developed by the Joanna Briggs Institute, recognises the three spheres of research, theory and practice as sources of evidence. Our aim was to develop a source book for students and practitioners of nursing and the other health professions that links evidence from diverse sources to the core of professional practice in health care: clinical decision-making and practice improvement.

## Using the book

This book takes a practical approach to developing, implementing and evaluating practice based on 'evidence' in its broadest sense. It does this by describing the complexities of evidence-based practice without over-simplifying the issues and processes involved. Where necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the principles of evidence-based practice, the theoretical underpinnings are explained and explored. A number of devices are incorporated in the book for this purpose. For example, scenarios from practice are included to give the reader an opportunity to apply the principles and strategies examined in the book. As an adjunct to this process, a toolbox approach is incorporated in the various chapters to aid in the identification of the right tool for the particular task.

As well as examining the concept of clinical effectiveness and the Cochrane Collaboration approach to the meta-analysis of quantitative research findings, we consider other forms of evidence and describe how they can be used as legitimate sources of evidence for practice. The book also describes the development of condensed practice information sheets and clinical guidelines. It gives practical guidance on the implementation of evidence-based practice. Evaluation is also addressed, utilising the mechanism of the clinical audit.

The book has been written for those who are committed to basing their practice on the best available evidence. It gives practical guidance to students and practising health professionals on the processes involved in pursuing a broad, comprehensive approach to the identification, appraisal and implementation of evidence for clinical practice. Thus, the book will be of assistance to people involved in the delivery of health care at every level from student health professionals through senior clinicians to those charged with the responsibility for managing health-care services.

Chapter 1 describes the development of evidence-based health care internationally and Chapter 2 overviews the JBI Model of Evidence-Based Health Care. Chapters 3 to 9 examine the components and elements of the JBI Model of Evidence-Based Health Care (What is Evidence for Practice? Chapter 3; Evidence Generation, Chapter 4; Evidence Synthesis, Chapters 5 and 6; Evidence Transfer, Chapter 7; and Evidence Utilisation, Chapters 8 and 9). Chapter 10 considers the future of evidence-based practice.

Each chapter includes additional resources for those who wish to explore further particular aspects of evidence-based health care.

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## About the Authors

### **Professor Alan Pearson** *PhD FRCNA FAAG FRCN RN*

Professor Alan Pearson has extensive experience in nursing practice, nursing research and academic nursing. Professor Pearson has been an active researcher since 1981 and is known internationally for his pioneering work on the establishment and evaluation of nursing beds in Oxford, UK, from 1981–1986 and for his ongoing work, which emphasises the centrality of practice and evidence-based practice.

Professor Pearson was appointed to Australia's first Chair in Nursing at Deakin University in 1986; was Foundation Professor of Nursing at the University of New England from 1992–1995; was Foundation Professor of Clinical Nursing at The University of Adelaide from 1995–1999; and was appointed as a Chairperson of the Commonwealth Aged Care Complaints Resolution Committee in 1998.

He has conducted a large number of competitively funded research projects. As well as his ongoing research in the fields of aged care, nursing history, and brain death and organ donation, Professor Pearson was founder of the Joanna Briggs Institute. He is currently Executive Director of the Institute, and Professor of Nursing at The University of Adelaide. Professor Pearson is Editor of the *International Journal of Nursing Practice* and has authored over 40 books and over 120 journal articles. He is active in developing and promoting evidence-based practice at the state, national and international levels.

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Zoe Jordan has been actively involved in the field of health research and communication for the last eight years. She has a Master of Arts (Communication Studies) for which much of her work was focused on utilisation of the mass media for the effective and accurate transfer of information. Having worked at the Joanna Briggs Institute for six years, Zoe has been intrinsically involved in the systematic review process, both as a reviewer and as a co-ordinator of the peer review process. She is currently the Manager, Communications and Consumers, at the Joanna Briggs Institute. This service endeavours to provide current, reliable, evidence-based health information to consumers of health care. Her work at the Institute focuses on contemporary approaches to health communication, specifically with regard to the emerging interrelationship and convergence of communication, media and culture in the context of a global society.