

Evidence Based Practice and Critical Appraisal Skills

Evidence-based practice (EBP) is an approach to health care in which health professionals consider the best research evidence available when making clinical decisions. This means that good health related research can often have a direct impact on the clinical decisions made by NHS staff and the care offered to patients. Understanding the processes of EBP will help you to consider the implications of your research and identify how your findings may then be put into practice. However, not all health related research is of a good enough standard or large enough scope to actively influence clinical practice. Critical appraisal skills are needed to make sense of the research evidence available, and assess its value or contribution to EBP. The following web sites provide expert guidance on finding and evaluating scientific literature, as well as acting on the evidence available.

Health Evidence Bulletins – Wales

The *Health Evidence Bulletins – Wales*, based at the University Of Wales College Of Medicine, acts as a signpost to the best evidence across a broad range of evidence types and subject areas. Its web page is very informative and offers bulletins of best evidence in a number of disorders, such as cancer, coronary heart disease & learning disabilities. It has an extensive project methodology section with sections to download on appraisal and systematic reviews, reference sheets & links to other useful sites and specialised information sources.

Web address: www.hebw.uwcm.ac.uk

Contact details: Health Evidence Bulletins Wales, Tel: 029 20 745142

Sheffield School of Health and Related Research: ScHARR

The ScHARR Core library, based at the University of Sheffield contains a virtual library of links to documents on all aspects of evidence-based practice, including appraisal of evidence based health care and critical appraisal of primary & secondary research.

Web addresses: www.shef.ac.uk/scharr and www.nettingtheevidence.org.uk

Contact details: School of Health and Related Research, Regent Court, 30 Regent Street, Sheffield S1 4DA, Tel: 0114 222 5454

Oxford Centre for Evidence Based Medicine

The Oxford centre has a very informative web page with sections on teaching, learning and carrying out Evidence Based Medicine. There are links to other sites as well as documents and tools available. The centre also offers training and a calendar of courses can be found on the webpage.

Web address: www.cebm.net

Contact details: University Dept. of Psychiatry, Warneford Hospital, Headington, Oxford, OX3 7JX, Tel: 01865 226485

British Medical Association

The BMA offers a range of evidence based resources, including definitions, descriptions of core articles and books, databases and web resources. They also

produce a factsheet on EBP and training materials taken from their course, “Finding the Evidence”.

Web address: www.bma.org.uk

Contact details: British Medical Association, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JP, Tel: 020 7387 4499

Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP)

CASP is a programme within Learning and Development at the Public Health Resource Unit. They offer web based tools and documents based on their three main areas of work, namely finding, appraising and acting on research evidence. They have critical appraisal tools for a range of 7 different study types, E Learning resources, an Open Learning Resource Pack and details of workshops available.

Web address: www.phru.nhs.uk/casp

Contact details: 4150 Chancellor Court, Oxford Business Park South, Oxford, OX4 2JY, Tel: 01865 334708

Suggested Reading

Crookes & Davies (1998), *Research into practice: essential skills for reading and applying research in nursing and health care*. London: Bailliere Trindall in association with the Royal College of Nursing

Roberts & Yeager (2004), *Evidence based practice manual: research and outcome measures in health and human services*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Rankin & Esteves (1996), How to assess a research study. *American Journal of Medicine*, Vol 96 (12), pp32-36.

Sackett, Straws, Scott Richardson, Rosenberg, Haynes, *Evidence Based medicine: How to teach and practice evidence based medicine*.