



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### Journey to Perianesthesia Excellence: Research and Evidence Based Practice

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**ASPAN President 2006-2007**

I was accompanied by a heat wave while traveling around the country to attend meetings as your president last summer. Before I knew it, summer quickly faded into fall and fall became winter, yet ASPAN's "evidence based practice heat wave" of summer continued in the many research activities happening within our organization. So why is research and evidence based practice (EBP) an enduring hot topic that is so important to us?

Nurses are sometimes reluctant to give up sacred cows, and as a result are slow to change practice. Nurses often adhere to tradition while clinging to "the way we always did it," even when some procedures lack data to prove effectiveness and validity. It takes time and energy to research what evidence exists, determine if the evidence is valid and reliable, and then share the information with other nurses and healthcare workers who can change policy and practice.

#### EBP at the Bedside

How do we bring EBP to the bedside? Transforming research into practice is a vital yet demanding task requiring intellectual skills, clinical judgment, endurance, and creativity. This transformation is not a new endeavor, but rather a continued expansion of previous efforts to produce best practice guidelines for appropriate patient care by using information from practice experts and empirical study.

Evidence based practice is a multi-step, dynamic process that incorporates the best external data, best clinical judgment, and known patient preferences. The EBP process can assist every perianesthesia nurse to find answers for refining practice. EBP means using the best clinical evidence to make patient care decisions.<sup>1</sup>

How do nurses do this? Begin by searching the literature to determine what studies have been conducted pertaining to the subject. Searching the literature takes practice, so even when you think you cannot find articles keep looking because some published information can often be found.

Existing research, when available, must then be evaluated before recommending a change in practice. The more journals you read, the more comfortable you become in reviewing research articles. Until you feel confident assessing the strength of published research study articles, stick with credible sources and clinical guidelines that offer reviews of existing evidence. Strengthen your skills by talking with a mentor, expert researcher, advanced practice nurse, or someone knowledgeable in this area. Join a local journal club, or check out ASPAN's new Online Journal Club.

#### Breaking the Barriers

In the June 2006 Journal of PeriAnesthesia Nursing (JoPAN), we published an article on barriers to EBP implementation.<sup>1</sup> Although barriers are frequently distracting and disturbing, nurses must continually search for improvements in care delivery and assess the evidence for recommendations to change practice. ASPAN's Online Journal Club posts monthly research articles to encourage interactive discussion among perianesthesia peers, while enabling you to discover currently available research findings. In addition to strengthening your research critique skills, you can become more comfortable with and excited about the research process!

Nursing research validates the care provided. Strategies for examining evidence encourage bedside nurses to investigate old nursing rituals and traditions, and if proven ineffective, to adopt practices grounded in scientific research. When no credible evidence is found, a research study can search for new information and provide the answer to a clinical inquiry. EBP not only benefits nurses, but also patients and families. Patients receive more consistent nursing interventions and achieve better outcomes. The most significant result, however, is that healthcare professionals practicing evidence based techniques experience increased autonomy, a willingness to be more accountable, and greater professionalism.

### **ASPAN and EBP**

The ASPAN EBP Committee met recently to review several articles focusing on patient care delivery/ nurse competence and transfer of care, and prioritized review of the 2006-08 ASPAN Standards for evidence ratings. This committee will subsequently assist the Standards & Guidelines Committee in their review next year. Our recent Component Development Institute provided "hands on" interactive EBP process learning exercises for members.

Our Perianesthesia Data Elements (PDE) Committee is working on a research project focusing on the data elements suggested by committee members. Storyboards developed by PDE committee members include an activity diagram and glossary of terms, which will be entered into the International Classification for Nursing Practice program. In addition to all this activity, a JoPAN focus issue on EBP was published in June 2006, so if you have not yet had the chance please take some time to read it!

As an experienced perianesthesia nurse, I cannot overlook my years of experience and clinical judgment. Analytical thinking skills, clear judgment when making clinical decisions, and professional experience should guide our practice. Therefore, when clinical situations occur with no significant supporting research to guide nursing actions, it is important to seek out colleagues and appraise best practices employed for specific situations. By continually asking new questions, generating evidence to answer those questions, and merging facts with clinical judgment and patient preferences, one can create a best practice culture.

### **Research and You**

As nursing practice evolves, the importance of adopting evidence based practice can never be overstated. Nurses must be a driving force in promoting best practices by looking for the best evidence available to shape safe and effective patient care. ASPAN will continue to advocate for scientific research and research utilization in practice, constantly looking for best practice evidence to shape our practice standards.

Every nurse can advance his or her practice by taking small steps toward learning and participating in the research process. I challenge you to start now! So, start asking yourself, "Does the nursing care I give to my patients provide a positive outcome? If not, why and how can we improve it?"

### **REFERENCE**

1. Windle P, Moving beyond the barriers for evidence based practice implementation, *Journal of PeriAnesthesia Nursing*, 21(3): 208-211, 2006.