

Improving Patient Outcomes with Evidence-Based Care

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Introduction

The concept of evidence-based care has become a core principle of healthcare practice around the world. Evidence-based care means a conscientious use of current best research evidence when making decisions about patient care. There are three major components of an evidence-based care model: the best available evidence, clinical expertise, and patient preferences and values. By integrating these three components of evidence, practitioners can provide high-quality, safe, and effective care to patients, ultimately resulting in improved individual patient outcomes and health service delivery systems.

The concept of evidence-based care originated from the broader movement in medicine known as evidence-based medicine, which focuses on using research results as the foundation for clinical decision-making. Historically, many healthcare practices relied on tradition, personal experience, and established patterns rather than research evidence as the basis for clinical decisions. Over the years, researchers and healthcare professionals have recognized the need to provide clinically safe and effective interventions supported by verifiable scientific evidence. Because of this,

evidence-based care remains the foundation of healthcare education, clinical practice, and policy.

Benefits of Evidence-Based Care

A major benefit of evidence-based care is improving patient safety and the quality of care patients receive. When healthcare providers use well-designed, scientifically based research, clinical guidelines, and systematic reviews, the resulting clinical decisions are much more likely to be based on current evidence than on historical evidence alone. Therefore, as patients receive more evidence-based interventions from healthcare providers, they will receive fewer medical errors and unnecessary interventions and will receive the most appropriate treatment for their particular situation. For this reason, patients will receive more consistent care from the healthcare system. Evidence-based care provides healthcare professionals with a framework for making clinical decisions by providing a systematic way to evaluate and incorporate research findings into clinical practice. Evidence-based practice typically follows four steps: identify a clinical problem; search for relevant research evidence; evaluate the quality of that research evidence; and integrate research findings with other evidence into your clinical practice. By following this systematic approach, healthcare providers can be assured that they will use valid and reliable sources when making decisions about patient care. Evidence-based practice also encourages health professionals to continue learning and growing.

An integral component of evidence-based care is recognizing the patients' beliefs and values. Scientific and clinical evidence are two important factors in making healthcare decisions; however, a patient's beliefs, culture, and personal preferences also need to be taken into account. Evidence-based practice uses a shared decision-making approach in which the patient and healthcare provider work together to choose the best available treatment options. This patient-centered approach increases the patient's confidence in their health care provider, increases patient satisfaction, and motivates the patient to become an active participant in their own health care.

Healthcare organizations and institutions play a significant role in successfully implementing evidence-based care. All hospitals, clinics, and health care systems must have access to high-quality research databases and clinical practice guidelines, and must also offer opportunities for continuing education. Health care organizations should also support interdisciplinary collaboration among physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and other health professionals to ensure the same evidence-based care is provided across all care settings.



Education and training are crucial to promoting evidence-based care among healthcare providers. Medical and allied health programs are placing greater emphasis on evidence-based practice in their curricula to equip students with the skills to evaluate research and apply it in clinical settings. Educational programs are generally developed to enhance students' abilities in literature search, critical appraisal of research evidence, and interpretation of research findings, thereby allowing healthcare professionals to remain current with scientific developments and incorporate new information into their practice.

Implementation of evidence-based care can present several difficulties despite its many advantages. One major hurdle is that healthcare professionals often have insufficient time to review and interpret research results. Practitioners can be extremely busy in their everyday clinical context and may have difficulty searching for and analyzing the scientific literature while managing patient demands. Additionally, some healthcare providers lack the necessary education or experience in conducting research appraisals, which will hinder their ability to effectively use evidence in practice.

Another challenge to providing evidence-based care is the variability in the quality and availability of research evidence. Not all published manuscripts are based on sound methodology, and some may present conflicting results. Therefore, healthcare providers must also become proficient in critically evaluating research studies before assessing their trustworthiness and applicability to specific clinical situations. Access to quality databases and systematic reviews will help healthcare professionals address this challenge and find reliable sources of information.

In recent years, technology has provided new tools to support evidence-based care. Digital health platforms, clinical decision-support systems, and electronic medical record systems allow healthcare professionals to rapidly access current relevant research results and clinical guidelines. Hospital systems that maintain these technologies can promote the use of evidence-based care more efficiently than those that do not, thereby accelerating its adoption across the healthcare system.

In addition to the technology, effective leadership and organizational culture must also support the successful execution of evidence-based care. Healthcare leaders must establish an environment that values, promotes, and supports research, innovation, and cross-departmental continuous improvement. A culture that encourages staff to participate in research initiatives, quality improvement practices, and continuing education can significantly impact the adoption of evidence-based practices within healthcare organizations. When healthcare leaders actively encourage evidence-

based practices, healthcare professionals are much more willing to utilize evidence-based research in their everyday practice.

To conclude, evidence-based care is a vital component in the quality of healthcare delivery, patient safety, and overall clinical outcomes. By integrating the best available research evidence, clinical expert opinion, and patient preferences into healthcare delivery, healthcare professionals will greatly improve the effectiveness of care. Although there are significant barriers to implementing evidence-based care, ongoing support for education, technology, and effective organizational leadership will help minimize them. As trends continue to evolve in the healthcare sector, evidence-based care will remain a fundamental foundation for enhancing medical practice by providing improved health outcomes for both individual and community populations.