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## Jump in with both Feet, the Waters Get Warmer over Time!

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## Jump in with Both Feet, the Waters Get Warmer over Time!

*Catherine Tieva*

Nursing research, evidence-based practice, literature reviews, meta-analysis, correlations, control and experimental groups, and validity. Terms like these used to make the hair on the back of my neck stand on end. My palms would break into a sweat, and if ever I felt inadequate as a nurse, it was in the area of nursing research. I would listen to advanced practice nurses, master's-prepared nurses, and doctorate-prepared nurses discussing research and feel totally inadequate. It didn't matter that at the time, I had 16 years of experience or that I was currently working as a nurse manager. Nursing research seemed to be a foreign language. To console myself, I would say that research wasn't my cup of tea. It was too dry, too complex, and impossible to undertake in the "real world."

Over time, it became apparent to me that I could stick my head in the sand and pretend it wasn't there, but the truth was, nursing research was here to stay. I decided to get brave and test the waters. I joined the research committee at the hospital where I work. Surrounded by a number of illustrious nurses with backgrounds that were equally impressive didn't do much to bolster my confidence. I sat at the table and listened and listened, and, you guessed right, listened some more. You couldn't have called me a big contributor to the group, but rather, I like to think of myself more like a sponge. The nurses on the committee were intelligent and passionate about nursing research and about evidence-based practice (EBP). They talked about this study and that study, and which researcher would be their biggest find for the nursing research conference they were planning. I wanted to volunteer, but they seemed to have everything under control. They really didn't seem to notice little old me at the table. This was not good. Normally I am a person of action. This treading water near the banks of the research river would never do. I decided I would have to start swimming.

It just so happened that about this time, the organization I work for was offering 16 individuals from various departments in the hospital the opportunity to learn basic skills to lead an EBP project of their own. Dr. Marita Titler,

Laura Cullen, and Hope Barton from the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics were coming to present a 3-day educational session complete with an EBP toolkit that would help us find our way down the “river of EBP.”

I was excited. Staff members who were interested in participating in this educational opportunity were required to fill out an application. Applicants needed to give an overview of their background and indicate what type of project they would carry out if given an opportunity. That is where I met my first roadblock. Applicants were required to have a minimum of a BSN. I only had an associate degree in nursing (ADN).

As I said earlier, I am a person of action. Undaunted, I submitted my application. I wanted to learn, and if I didn't apply, I would not have any chance to participate. Several weeks later, I received news that I had been selected as one of the 16 nurses in the organization to participate in the educational sessions. I was ecstatic and prepared to attempt to paddle down the river of EBP once again. That said, you may be wondering what project I decided to undertake. I work on an oncology unit. Fatigue is a problem that is experienced by nearly all cancer patients undergoing treatment. According to the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), fatigue is the least assessed, educated about, and addressed side effect of cancer overall. I thought that this would make an excellent project. It could be carried out not only on the inpatient unit but in the outpatient, radiation oncology, chemo infusion, home care, and outreach settings as well.

Nervous, hesitant, and armed with a basic course on EBP, I remained determined, and I set out to undertake my first official EBP project. I have to admit that the waters weren't always smooth, and I needed a life preserver of encouragement along the way, but I did it! I learned by trial and error. I am happy to report that the cancer fatigue project has been implemented. I have more confidence, and in fact, I have undertaken several other projects using research to guide the way.

Each time, it gets a little bit easier. For a person who didn't have a clue where to begin several years ago, I can say without hesitation that undertaking EBP projects is not only fun but also the right thing to do for our patients and their families. There is literature out there that can guide you along the way. If you have never attempted an EBP project, my suggestion is, “Come on in, the water is fine!”

**Acknowledgment:** The author would like to recognize the expertise of Roxanne Wilson, Internal Medicine Care Center director at St. Cloud, and Sandy Johnson, oncology clinical nurse specialist, for the guidance, patience, and expertise they provided to me as a novice utilizing evidence-based knowledge in my practice.

Intro

**Purpose:**

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