# **REPORT**

# TECHNIQUES UNDERTAKEN TO DISSEMINATE THE EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE AMONG HOSPITAL NURSES

TÉCNICAS EMPREENDIDAS PARA DIFUSÃO DA PRÁTICA BASEADA EM EVIDÊNCIAS ENTRE ENFERMEIROS HOSPITALARES

TÉCNICAS ADOPTADAS PARA DIFUNDIR LA PRÁCTICA BASADA EN EVIDENCIAS ENTRE ENFERMEROS DE UN HOSPITAI

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed at reporting an experience of diffusion of Evidence-Based Practices among nurse managers of a public university teaching hospital in the Triângulo Mineiro. This research is related to a university extension activity implemented by the sector that advises research development in this hospital in collaboration with the Nursing School at the Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro. Five Motivational Wokshops for Evidence-Based Practice were conducted between August and September of 2015, when the techniques were developed, which were approached from a hermeneutic-dialectic perspective. The nurse managers of the hospitalization assistance unit composed the focus group. The workshops were structured in the following steps: constitution of the Driving Group, Interest Group Mobilization, and work development in the workshops. A structured questionnaire was applied to characterize the focal group. The average age of participants was 35.1 years, most were women (95%), and all had graduate degrees. The techniques involved from discursive strategies to warm-up artistic expressions and group task development in order to help group operations, collective construction of knowledge, and aid nurse managers in identifying opportunities to improve processes or clinical results in their daily work by incorporating qualified scientific evidence. The level of knowledge of the Driving Group for mediation and the intrinsic characteristics of the focus group, such as an awareness of the value of research to qualify assistance, were factors that made the development of the Workshops easier and improved the success in the techniques development.

Keywords: Evidence-Based Nursing; Leadership; Hospitals, Teaching; Focus Groups.

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#### **RESUMO**

O objetivo deste estudo foi relatar uma experiência sobre a difusão da prática baseada em evidências entre enfermeiros gerentes de um hospital público de ensino do Triângulo Mineiro. Trata-se de um projeto de pesquisa que tem a extensão universitária como uma de suas interfaces. Foi implementado pelo setor responsável por assessorar o desenvolvimento de pesquisas desse hospital em parceira com o curso de graduação de Enfermagem da universidade correspondente. As técnicas foram empreendidas durante o desenvolvimento de cinco oficinas motivacionais à prática baseada em evidências, realizadas entre agosto e setembro/2016, por perspectiva hermenêutico-dialética, e os gerentes de enfermagem das unidades assistenciais de internação compuseram o grupo focal. A organização das oficinas conduziu-se por: constituição do grupo condutor; mobilização do grupo de interesse e desenvolvimento do trabalho nas oficinas em si. Foi aplicado questionário estruturado para caracterização do grupo focal. Os participantes apresentaram média de idade de 35,1 anos, maioria de mulheres (95%), todos com pós-graduação. As técnicas empreendidas envolveram desde estratégias discursivas até expressões artísticas para aquecimento e desenvolvimento da tarefa grupal, de forma a auxiliarem a operatividade do grupo, a construção coletiva do conhecimento e ajudar os enfermeiros gerentes a identificar oportunidades no cotidiano para aprimorar processos ou resultados clínicos mediante a incorporação de evidências científicas qualificadas. O nível de preparo do grupo condutor para mediação e características intrínsecas ao grupo focal como a consciência do valor das pesquisas para qualificar a assistência foram fatores facilitadores para o desenvolvimento das oficinas e o sucesso no empreendimento das técnicas.

Palavras-chave: Enfermagem Baseada em Evidências; Liderança; Hospitais de Ensino; Grupos Focais.

### RESUMEN

El objeto del presente estudio fue describir la experiencia de difusión de la práctica basada en evidencias entre enfermeros gerentes de un hospital universitario público del Triángulo Mineiro. Se trata de una investigación que considera que la extensión universitaria es una de sus interfaces. Fue implementado por el sector responsable de asesorar al desarrollo de investigaciones del hospital conjuntamente con el curso de grado de Enfermería de la universidad correspondiente. Las técnicas fueron adoptadas durante el desarrollo de cinco talleres de motivación a la práctica basada en evidencias, entre agosto y septiembre/2016, desde una perspectiva hermenéutica-dialéctica. El grupo focal estaba formado por gerentes de enfermería de unidades de hospitalización. La organización de los talleres fue la siguiente: constitución del grupo conductor; movilización del grupo de interés y desarrollo del trabajo en los talleres. Para caracterizar al grupo focal se utilizó un cuestionario estructurado. La edad promedio de los participantes era 35,1 años, la mayoría eran mujeres (95%), todos con posgrado. Las técnicas adoptadas incluyeron desde estrategias discursivas hasta expresiones artísticas para calentamiento y desarrollo de la tarea grupal, ayudar en la operatividad del grupo, en la construcción colectiva de conocimiento y apoyar a los gerentes de enfermería para que puedan identificar las oportunidades en la vida con miras a mejorar los procesos y los resultados clínicos por medio de la incorporación de evidencias científicas cualificadas. El nivel de preparación del grupo conductor para la mediación y las características del grupo focal, como la conciencia del valor de las investigaciones para la calidad de la atención, favorecieron el desarrollo de los talleres y el éxito de las técnicas adoptadas.

Palabras clave: Enfermería Basada en la Evidencia; Liderazgo; Hospitales de Enseñanza; Grupos Focales.

# INTRODUCTION

The importance that welfare practices are increasingly anchored in safe research results, that is, based on scientific evidence, has been recognized in the last decades by the population, academic-scientific community, health workers, and health organizations. At the present time, a worldwide movement for the improvement of quality of health services is being established, which promotes the integration of research and practice in order to qualify care, increase patient safety, and optimize costs.<sup>1-4</sup>

Considering that nursing workers are the most expressive contingent in the hospital environment, transformations in their way of performing work in health care impacts the organization as a whole. However, it is necessary to break with nonsystematized practices in this profession and extend the critical judgment of nursing teams. Faced with these needs, Nursing presupposes that nurses have the skills and competencies to make decisions in complex situations in different scenarios. It is expected that they act based on robust evidence-based knowledge, with the potential to enable creative, cost-effective, and cost-effective solutions to address the health and nursing care demands of populations. Nevertheless, while this is desir-

able, nurses are not always ready to translate research results into their everyday practice.<sup>1-4</sup>

The incorporation of scientific evidence into the nursing practice allows improving their technical-scientific competence to develop or choose more qualified patients' products, processes, and services.<sup>2,4</sup> Although there are different models to support the implementation of evidence-based practice (EBP) in Nursing, it is still a challenge to be overcome in the world.<sup>4</sup> There are gaps in the national production on the subject, especially when it comes to its development in professional training scenarios, such as teaching hospitals linked to universities.<sup>5</sup>

It is emphasized that universities play a central role in involving students in teaching and research activities. Providing that learning scenarios that induce innovative solutions to the daily problems faced by nursing teams is one of their vocations.<sup>1,3</sup> In this perspective, the experience of undergraduate and graduate nursing students in initiatives that favor the critical incorporation of research results in the decision-making process presents itself as a current demand.

However, the scope of favorable changes to the implementation of EBP in nursing care and training initially demands

the establishment of an organizational environment that motivates this incorporation.<sup>1,3</sup> Given the current relevance of the concepts that outline EBP in nursing, its diffusion is presented as a premise for the achievement of its implementation among students and nursing workers and in health organizations as a whole. Nurses who work in training or care, and present a conceptual domain on the EBP theme, are still scarce.<sup>1,3</sup> This fact reinforces the need for initiatives with the aim of disseminating these concepts in teaching hospitals linked to universities.

In general, workshops are theoretical and methodological strategies that facilitate the diffusion of innovations such as EBP because they are interactive spaces capable of fostering critical potential and production of new meanings in the participating group.<sup>6</sup> However, the stimulating techniques employed in the development of workshops support the conduction and attainment of new subjectivities.<sup>6,7</sup> Regarding EBP, the undertaken techniques can guide the perception of opportunities for changes in the practice of assistance and training, given the essential integration of scientific investigations in the know-how of the contemporary nurse. Additionally, the employed techniques favor group operability and guide group configuration and the dialectic between the implicit and explicit task of the group process.<sup>6,7</sup>

Hence, the present study aimed to report the experience of using undertaken techniques in the conduction of workshops for the dissemination of evidence - based practice among nurse managers of hospitalization units in a public teaching hospital.

# **EXPERIENCE DESCRIPTION**

This is an experience report on a research project with an interface with a university extension activity entitled "Promotion of research development and consumption among the HC-UFTM Community"\*. The study scenario was a large general public and teaching hospital (332 beds) - a macroregional reference for the high assistance complexity of the Triângulo site in southern Minas Gerais, Brazil. The initiative was a partnership established between the group that advises the research development in this hospital - Research and Technological Innovation Sector of the Teaching and Research Management - and the undergraduate Nursing School of the corresponding university.

Workshops were organized by focus group and guided by hermeneutic-dialectic interventions.<sup>6-8</sup> There were five meetings, totaling 10 hours, between August and September of 2016. The workshops were conducted in the following stages: stage I – formation of the driving group; stage II – the mobiliza-

tion of the interest group; and stage III – development of work in the workshops.

The stage I – formation of the driving group – integrated the workshop planning and mediation. The roles of mediator, supporters, and observers were discussed. These members acted collaboratively in this strategic project and included two nurses with experience in group mediation, two professors, three graduate students (two in the masters' degree program and one in the doctorate program); and six undergraduate students. Teaching staff and nurses with experience in the theme of the driving group were trained to leverage relevant conducts and concepts; the roles of coordinators, facilitators, and observers in the workshops were divided among participants. Systematic meetings were held prior to and after each workshop to plan intervention techniques, evaluate the process, and readjust directions.

The stage II – mobilization of the interest group – was composed of the dissemination of workshops, organization of a working agenda – with a view to harmonization of schedules – and compromise among participants. The interest group was formed by members of the focal group: nurses in managerial activities and supervisors of hospitalization units established in the organizational chart of the teaching hospital. Prior articulations took place with the hospital superintendence and the nursing division to protect the participation of supervisors in the workshops.

The stage III – the development of work in the workshops – was constituted by exchanges of experiences and collective constructions carried out in an appropriate room within the hospital. There were five weekly meetings, lasting 120 minutes each, between 08/09/2016 and 09/16/2016. The main purpose of the workshops was to disseminate EBP and motivate nurse managers to identify opportunities in their daily work to change practices and improve processes or clinical outcomes through the incorporation of qualified scientific evidence.

A structured questionnaire was elaborated by the authors for the characterization of the participants regarding sociode-mographic aspects and previous experience with researches. The data collection took place simultaneously with the development of workshops. The CNS 466/2012 Resolution was respected, and this research was approved in 2016 by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro under opinion no. 1.1618.872, and developed after all participants signed the Volunteer and Informed Consent Term.

# EXPERIENCE REPORT AND DISCUSSION

The teaching hospital presents 18 nurse managers of hospitalization care units in its organization chart. An average of 16.2 nurses participated in each workshop. The mean age was 35.1 years (sd =  $\pm$  2.7 years), the majority were women (n

<sup>\*</sup> University extension project linked to the Setor de Pesquisa e Inovação Tecnológica of the Gerência de Ensino e Pesquisa do HC-UFTM, Call for Proposals PROEXT 04/2016 – Continuous Flow, of the Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro.

= 15; 95%), in a stable union (n = 14; 85%), and self-declared with white skin color (n = 10; 60%). On average, they are Nursing graduates for 11.1 years (sd =  $\pm$  3.9 years), worked as nurses for 10.5 years (sd =  $\pm$  3.8 years), and in the teaching hospital for 9.5 years (sd =  $\pm$  4 years). In relation to previous research experience, all have attended *lato sensu* graduate studies, six of them with completed masters' degree; seven participated in scientific initiation during undergraduate studies, five participated in research projects or technological innovation in the last 12 months, and two have published articles in a Nursing scientific journal.

Each workshop was conducted according to the following steps: warm up, use of strategies to facilitate expression - according to the undertaken stimulating technique, problemsolving of questions, exchange process, articulation within the general theme, and evaluation. They were developed by the following phases: a thematic approach to EBP - composing the conceptual recognition and of the necessary competences in individuals and organization; practical problem-solving in EBP - identifying barriers to the use of research results in the context; in addition to the construction of feasibility for the implementation of EBP in hospitalization units.

At the end of each workshop, a theoretical reference article was distributed with the intent to help to understand the presented concepts. The techniques used to disseminate the theme during the workshops, in relation to the explicit group task, were characterized by the objectives and themes worked out during the workshops (Table 1).

In relation to the undertaken techniques, this process sought to articulate diverse procedures that involved from discursive strategies to artistic expressions for the conduction of a space of symbolic exchanges capable of enhancing the sensitization of participants in the focal group to the thematic worked. The use of these group techniques during the workshops aimed to support the group in the mediation of the implicit task: the evaluation of group movements and their dynamics (Table 2).

Observers monitored the focus group in order to identify the underlying meaning that the undertaken techniques could have achieved among group participants. It was observed that the undertaken techniques induced the focus group to generate intersubjective discussions and exchanges, revealing a wide variety of potential interactions. Finally, the undertaken techniques offered opportunities to engage the focus group participants in a collaborative and motivating work on the theme.

Table 1 - Characterization of workshops according to their thematic dimension and objectives to be achieved for the dissemination of evidence-based practice among nurse managers at a teaching hospital – Uberaba, Minas Gerais, Brazil, 2016

Workshops	Dimensions	Themes	Objectives
1	EBP Thematic Approach	What is evidence-based nursing practice (EBP)?	To discuss the EBP concept
2	Practical Problem-solving	Which knowledge, attitudes and practices are essential for EBP?	To identify which knowledge, attitudes, and practices are essential for EBP
3		Why is it difficult to produce and apply research results in my practice sector?	Problem-solve difficulties for the development of EBP in this sector
4	Construction of Viabilities	How can I facilitate the production and use of research results in my sector?	To develop local strategies to enable the production and use of research results
5		What do I need to authorize a research project in my sector?	Set up routines for the authorization of research

Table 2 - Description of the undertaken techniques for warm-up and development according to motivational workshops for evidence-based practice – Uberaba, Minas Gerais, Brazil, 2016

Workshops	Undertaken stimulating techniques		
		Development	
1	Dynamics: "Box of expectations".  Description: Each participant deposits a piece of paper in a gift box. In this paper, they should write what expectation they have about the workshops in one word. After this moment, the lead should read the expectations, present the purpose of the workshop, and reinforce that it is seen as a gift.	Dynamics: Practical simulation of EBP in this hospital.  Description: select a small group among participants, with up to five people, to dramatize a situation of how EBP has occurred in daily work. The construction of the scene starts from the conception that this small group presents about EBP. The movement is spontaneous and little elaborated. The others should be aware and register the characters and the situation. Highlight five people, different from the initial group, to reconstitute the same scene, only now, in a more positive way.	

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Table 2 - Description of the undertaken techniques for warm-up and development according to motivational workshops for evidence-based practice – Uberaba, Minas Gerais, Brazil, 2016

Workshops	Undertaken stimulating techniques		
	Warm-up	Development	
2	Dynamics: "Cordless phone".  Description: Ask participants to stand up and form a circle. One participant should send a message or word in the ear of the person next to him, who must carry out the same action, until the message reaches the last participant who, in turn, should express what he understood. Relate the dynamics to the guided practice through being traditional or reproductive and the gains of EBP.	Dynamics: "Signal technique (green, yellow, and red) for knowledge, attitudes, and practices about EBP".  Description: organize three small groups among participants.  Each group will be responsible for discussing and presenting the respective concepts in a plenary section: Knowledge, attitude, and practice of EBP. For this, it is necessary to think the formulation of concepts according to the signal technique. Namely: green – something that is extremely favorable; yellow – something that must be undertaken with caution; and red – what should be avoided.	
3	Dynamics: Reflection on the importance of scientific knowledge.  Description: presentation of an allusive image of how knowledge makes the world's vision broader. Allow the contemplation of the image. Ask participants to express themselves spontaneously about how they believe the image relates to the process of developing workshops up to this date. Conclude the dynamics, reinforcing the supportive objective of this process to the EBP.	Dynamics: "A brick wall to be overcome".  Description: distribute flyers (at least three for each participant) and request that, after remembrance of the last day of work, they fill in these flyers with what they believe to be the main barriers to EBP in their scenario of action. Each barrier should be described in these flyers, which should be placed on the wall to form a "wall of barriers". It is not necessary to explain the barrier but it is important to think about the wall formed and think about how to overcome it.	
4	Dynamics: "A brick in the way".  Description: To display a brick in the activity room with the purpose of hindering people's movements. Do not express any information about the brick in the room. Observe how participants react and move (they jump the brick, observe it with curiosity, show indifference about it). In general, the brick represents obstacles, challenges, and it is important to reflect about stances before these.	Dynamics: "Give me some advice".  Description: To distribute sheets to participants to record their notes.  In pairs, guide one participant to advise the other on actions to enable the production and use of research in the sector. While one participant gives advice, the other must write them down; roles are subsequently reversed. It is important that the advice overcomes the organizational, team, and personnel dimensions for action.	
5	Dinâmica: "What's in the bag?".  Description: place objects in a black bag and ask participants to identify what they are through using touch. Guide them to not exchange information. To verbalize their opinions after assessing the objects through touch. To establish relationships between the difficulty of identifying objects only by touch and the difficulty of understanding research projects that will be carried out in the care units.	Debate on the ordinal flow of research projects to be carried out in the teaching hospital.  Description: to stimulate group discussion about the main difficulties encountered for the authorization and development of research projects in hospitalization units. Renew new agreements from this problem-solving section.	

In general, the workshops have been theoretical-methodological strategies used in different contexts, along with various populations, for reflections on different themes in nursing, and thus, are a shared learning modality guided by hermeneutic-dialectic interventions. <sup>6-9</sup> This approach has favored the exploration of data by researchers regarding the experience of a group in the face of situations generated by the participants themselves.

The focus group concept that has been taken into account is the exercise of focusing on a specific theme and seeking the conduction of discursive propositions considering the intersubjective value elaborated by a specific group of people. It is worth emphasizing that experiencing a focal group in itself is characterized as a stimulus-generating technique.<sup>8</sup>

The group interaction presented itself as an implicit device in the constitution of its operationalization.<sup>6-8</sup> The undertaken techniques facilitated the development of a group process that aimed at understanding this experience from the point of view of considering participants as a unit. Thus, the importance of moderation of the group process was emphasized to

allow the apprehension of the innumerable movements that occur in the group, such as representations and affective loads. The moderator's stance presented itself as conciliatory to ensure that implicit situations could converge to the common objective: the proposed task.<sup>7,8</sup>

The nursing work has been permeated by group processes that increasingly need to be identified in order to achieve a more meaningful re-signification of the practice. Contemporary studies have revealed the use of focus groups as an effective strategy in changing the reality of care and work situations in health care teams. <sup>6-9</sup>

Considering the need to spread an organizational culture favorable to EBP, the contemporary literature presented the engagement of nursing leaders as crucial.<sup>4,10</sup> Nursing leaders, nurses occupying management posts, presented themselves as fundamental to the reorientation of the work routine to support changes in procedures or technical-assistance behaviors.<sup>4,10</sup> However, the selection of stimulating techniques for conducting focus groups is not an exact science.<sup>6-9</sup>

The implementation of EBP is a worldwide challenge. Many of the failures and discontinuities upon its implementation in health care services occur due to the disregarded of the psycho-cultural aspects existing among the nurses involved. Faced with this reality, one should seek the development of initiatives that increase cooperation among workers and their engagement in an organizational climate conducive to change.<sup>4</sup>

Above all, the elaboration that was sought in the workshops was not restricted to a unidirectional reflection, but to the engagement of participants in an integral way, to their thinking-acting ways, and therefore, to favor the implementation of EBP. The relations between the driving and interest groups were established horizontally, facilitating individual expressions and intergroup communication as motivational and diffusion elements of contents. No initiatives that presented similar aspects to the experience reported here were identified in the literature.

Therefore, the development of this research project with an interface with the university extension activity allowed presenting EBP concepts to nurse managers and undergraduate and graduate Nursing students who participated in the workshops. This made the reported experience relevant in the academic formation through intersectoral partnership and collaboration by exposing students to essential knowledge to act in the EBP perspective through participating in an experience capable of enabling and potentiating the coping of contemporary care demands.

### CONCLUSION

In general, for the group of nurse managers, the exposure to EBP presented itself as a distant theme from their daily activities. The focus group identified the need to expand competencies beyond those usually performed at that hospital for its implementation. However, the strategy proposed through the workshops was demonstrated as a method to facilitate the approach of the focus group to the theme and to identify feasibility for an action guided by the EBP. The constant participation of nurse managers in each workshop and the recognition of meetings as spaces of collective constructions were considered aspects of receptivity to the proposed theme.

Regarding the validity of the undertaken techniques in this study, the previous experience of the driving group in mediating the work with the focal group was an influencing factor. Other factors contributed to facilitating the mediation of the group against the proposed objectives, such as the intrinsic characteristics of the focus group itself related to the awareness of the value of research for the qualification of assistance, because all participants had a graduate degree and the majority had previous experience with research projects. However,

new studies are needed to assess the factors that contributed to the success of the undertaken techniques and the sustainability of the results achieved in the workshops.

Hence, the implementation of workshops constituted an opportune space for the apprehension of concepts about EBP. Mainly, the workshops represented a potential for the dissemination of aspects that are conducive to the increase of EBP at the teaching hospital where this study was conducted. In general, the undertaken techniques were valid and conducive to be used in workshops with nursing leaders in similar contexts as well as their expansion as a proposing experience for the qualification of training of Nursing students. For the nursing practice, this experience was presented as timely to propagate EBP and as a guideline for the performance of hospital nurses.

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