Translating Research

As neuroscience nurses we aspire for best and evidenced based practice, but often we forget about the journey of research from being a new finding or information to translating into practice. Historically, there has been a disconnect between the academic researcher and clinical practice and the transfer of new knowledge has been sporadic at best.

One particular example that comes to mind is triple H therapy where the current clinical practice still continues despite more recent research findings suggesting alternative and modified approaches to care. This is not uncommon with the time lag from research to clinical practice estimated to be around 17 years.

Translating research into clinical practice is an absolute policy priority. For me as an aspiring researcher in the field of neuro epidemiology, translational research extends the basic principles of my research beyond the statistics and numbers. My aspirations are simple and include the translation of my research findings into practice, in order to offer the possibility of improving patient outcomes with a focus on improving the diagnosis and treatment and where possible identifying at risk populations and applying preventative measure.

For this to occur I have had to extend my research beyond nursing and take an interdisciplinary approach that has involved a number of stakeholders from different disciplines as well as the use of social and geographical indicators. This process and collaboration has been fundamental in understanding how my cohort can be interpreted and described to best represent the individuals in my study.

As my research continues to demonstrate degrees of socioeconomic disadvantage I find myself naturally thinking of how I can translate my research to not only address my aims but to also influence the health outcomes of specific populations at risk.

What were you doing in 2001? How much has changed in the world of neuroscience in 17 years? This is the estimated gap between the conduct of high quality research, including randomised controlled trials and systematic reviews, and its eventual implementation into practice. In an era of increasingly rapid changes in technology and patient complexity, and increasing disparities in health outcomes according to geography and socio-economic status there are significant challenges around research keeping up with contemporary practice, and for practice to critique and implement research that supports optimal patient-centred care.

The timely and efficient translation of research into practice has great capacity to improve practice and patient outcomes and brings us to the world of implementation science — "The scientific study of methods to promote the uptake of research findings into routine healthcare in clinical, organisational or policy contexts".

A well-established example of a research implementation framework is Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Services (PARIHS). It has been developed and tested based on the principles of the strength of the evidence for practice improvement and the preparedness of the clinical context for change.

Keeping up with the evidence highlights the importance of conferences such as the upcoming ANNA Annual conference. Mixing with experts in your field provides a fertile environment for presentation and discussion regarding the most up-to-date neuroscience nursing research.

But just knowing is not enough. There are major challenges associated with changing practice in your own context that are well described by the PARIHS framework. This framework incorporates essential elements of
The AJON and ANNA, through the annual scientific meeting, plays a significant role in this journey for any aspiring author or presenter, enabling the sharing of original and innovative research.

From this sharing effective change can occur successfully on both a national and international level. A large part of an editor’s or scientific conference convenors role is providing feedback on how best to present manuscripts and work to facilitate effective translation into practice.

I look forward to continuing to collaborate with members, researchers, clinicians, and other stakeholders and working together to publish quality translational research and working to solve healthcare problems.

Linda

change, including leadership support, culture, educational needs and local receptivity to change.

While these steps sounds like common sense we know that common sense is not that common and, in the area of research translation, we see passive approaches such as distribution of guidelines or pathways consistently failing to change practice or improve patient outcomes.

Evidence-based practice needs evidence-based implementation and the PARIHS framework is one of numerous approaches available for researchers and practitioners to translate research into practice and diminish the unacceptable 17 year gap.

I wish all the ANNA members well in their collaborations and efforts to translate research into practice for optimal patient care.


Leigh

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