

The Individual: by Tracey Bucknall

The clinical setting is a complex, dynamic and uncontrolled environment. Information is often ambiguous, incomplete and affords significant potential for clinical error as a result. However, proponents of the evidence based practice movement advocate that using research will result in less variability, better decisions and improved patient outcomes. Much research to date has focused on developing our understanding of an individual's barriers and facilitators in using research in practice. Yet twenty years of research has shown little variation in results internationally, demonstrating we are no closer to knowing how to use research information and target dissemination strategies. Furthermore, there has been a dependence on survey methods with each variable being viewed in isolation. Future research must use alternative approaches such as observation, interviews and network tracking to provide a more pragmatic view of the contextual influences on an individual's decision making and clinical practice. These methods need to account for the complex and dynamic interactions that occur between clinicians, patients and the clinical environment. This presentation will argue that knowledge utilisation and transfer is a multidimensional problem that warrants a systematic mixed method approach. In addition, multidisciplinary research teams are recommended to broaden individual agendas and approaches to problems, since clinicians tend not to function in isolation and without interaction. Only then will we be able to capture the complexities faced by the individual in clinical practice.