This is a Brief Online Learning Tutorial (or BOLT) brought to you by the LISTEN project, a HRSA funded project focusing on improving the information literacy competencies of nursing students and professional nurses.
There is so much information available to nurses. When searching for different types of information, do you often feel overwhelmed and ask yourself *Do I have enough information?* This BOLT will help you focus your search, no matter the setting and better prepare you to know when you have enough information.
Do you ever become frustrated while doing literature reviews, creating presentation slides, working on projects, or looking for patient information and wonder if you have enough information?

Frustration

Too much! Do I have enough?

What should I do?
If you are working on a research project or a dissertation you may need to do a literature review to see what has been published on your topic area and to find out if anyone has done similar research. There is really never enough information until you've exhausted all resources. In order to be thorough, the search must include everything relevant and related to your topic.
Suppose you are writing a grant proposal. You've got a few good articles. You were wondering whether you still need to spend more time looking for more information. You might stop here if the information you collected can provide an adequate and strong justification for your proposal.
If you are a nursing student searching for a course assignment. Your search may be thorough and comprehensive with only a few articles if they are specific and appropriate articles for your topic.
It is always important to exhaust multiple resources when it involves medications and administration. This is important in practice, and it is also vitally important when performing clinical trials. The literature must be searched comprehensively and properly to ensure you won't miss a single published report of all possible side effects or adverse reactions related to the drug being tested within the clinical trials.
If you are a nurse providing patient care, you need to find the best evidence related to your patient and clinical question very quickly. Due to the shortage of time you must focus your question, and know where and how to search effectively.
Think about traveling. If you don't know where you're going, any route will get you there AND any place will probably be fine - you need a destination. Similarly, you need to know what you are doing with the information before you can honestly judge when enough is enough.
In summary, you must have a focus or you may never know when you have enough information. Just as important as a focus is the need for the information. Finally, know your destination and how you are going to use the information. Use these 3 questions to avoid being overwhelmed by too much information and to make sure you know when you have enough information.
Continue to visit the LISTEN website, at listenuphealth.org, for more helpful tips on using technology and seeking, evaluating, and applying information in nursing to support evidence-based nursing practice.
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