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.
You are often motivated to seek additional information in certain situations. These situations might be related to patient care questions, decreasing costs, helping colleagues, or improving your knowledge base. How do you know it is evidence-based information? Where do you go? This tutorial offers tips on how to identify information resources available to the clinical nurse for evidence-based nursing practice.
One of the difficulties that all clinicians must contend with is figuring out where to look for the information they need. Knowing what databases, such as CINAHL, PubMed/Medline, and the Cochrane databases, are available and when to access them is essential. Being able to search these databases will keep you abreast of what studies are pertinent in your field, and what studies may be pertinent from other professions, such as dentistry or medicine. Finally, although the problem is diminishing, having access to the Internet is important for accessing support services, not only for searching these databases, but for services such as those of a medical librarian or interlibrary loan.
Having access to the Internet is important, but knowing where to go is a question that can often be answered by a medical librarian or by your nurse manager. They can tell you if you have access to key databases, whether you can download full text articles, or how to acquire articles on interlibrary loan. Also, the BOLT on “Information Resources” will help you to focus your question with regard to which format (electronic or paper) will be most helpful.
Databases are an excellent clinical resource. They organize the journal literature to make it much simpler to find just the articles you are looking for. However, databases are complex and require a familiarity with how they work before they can be used efficiently and effectively. PubMed, CINAHL, and the Cochrane databases are only a few specialized databases available to search. For more information on databases, see the BOLT titled *Key Databases for Nurses.*
For more information visit: http://www.listenuphealth.org
Developed by
Richard Nollan, MLS, MA
LISTEN Health Science Librarian

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