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.
With demands of evidence-based nursing practice, how do you know you are seeking information in the most effective way? Is the information you are obtaining up to date and accurate? Is the information you are seeking answering your clinical question effectively? Does the information retrieved address the specific clinical situation? What are the most effective resources? This tutorial will help you find answers to these questions.
Is my colleague a good source of evidence-based information?

Although your colleague may not be incorrect; it is possible that the information they provide is not the most up to date or accurate.

Although many times it may seem a more effective approach to simply ask your co-worker, this may not always be the most accurate or appropriate information. The information may not be incorrect, but to guarantee accuracy while caring for your patients, it is vital that the resources you seek are accurate.
Specialized online resources can help you find evidence-based information quickly and effectively.

For example, Micromedex has a wide range of evidence-based information about drugs, toxicology, diseases, acute care, and alternative medicine. Mosby’s nursing consult contains Evidence-Based Nursing Monographs that provides practicing nurses with the latest and most relevant evidence to solve clinical problems. Mosby’s Nursing Consult also has more than 250 Practice Guidelines on major clinical topics that were written by nurse experts from a nursing perspective. If you need systematic review articles and clinical trials, PubMed/Medline and the Cochrane Library or Cochrane Collection are the resources you can start with. The nursing and allied health database CINAHL has evidence-based care (EBC) sheets. They provide concise and comprehensive overview of clinical issues. Each EBC sheet incorporates the latest evidence, statistics, research and references on a given topic. The references are ranked according to the type of literature they represent such as systematic reviews, meta-analysis, etc. Topics range from end-of-life care and decision making to menopause and depression.

Note that, all these resources mentioned are not free, except for PubMed/Medline. Check with your library to see if you have access to these resources.
So are textbooks effective? Although books and manuals can be useful, they may not be the most effective resource due to the lag time from authorship to print. Evidence-based nursing practice relies on the most up to date information from the best evidence available.

As for Google and other internet based search engines, they are not necessarily the most effective resource since you have to examine a variety of resources to find accurate and appropriate information.
In summary, seeking information effectively involves more than searching for information. The information retrieved should be accurate, appropriate, relevant, and current for your clinical practice and patient care. Knowledge about specialized online resources and how to use them can save you time and facilitate finding accurate and appropriate information to answer your specific clinical questions.
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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