Evidence Based Practice

What is it?
Evidence-based practice (EBP) is an approach to care that integrates the best available research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values.

Why is it important?
EBP encourages clinicians to incorporate information from high quality research (quantitative and qualitative) with their clinical expertise and the client's background, preferences and values when making decisions. It gets us thinking about questions such as:
- Why am I doing this in this way?
- Is there evidence that can guide me to do this in a more effective way?

How do I do it?
Different practitioners at different levels of responsibility within evidence-based organisations will require different skills for EBP and different types of evidence. To ensure we incorporate best evidence into clinical care effectively, a systematic approach is required. With the right support, practice and experience we can all learn how to do evidence-based practice competently using a five-step process.

ASK: Formulate an answerable clinical question - PICO is a useful tool for asking focused clinical questions

ACCESS: Track down the best evidence with which to answer that question

APPRAISE: Critically appraise the evidence

APPLY: Integrate the results with your clinical expertise and patient values/local conditions

ASSESS: Evaluate the effectiveness of the process

But first…
To be considered an evidence-based practice, the procedure/treatment must be shown to be effective in multiple high-quality research studies across multiple settings with many participants. Not all research is of sufficient quality to inform clinical decision making and some evidence-based practices have only been shown by research to be effective with very specific populations.

Therefore, you need to critically appraise evidence before using it to inform your clinical decision making. Critically appraising your evidence will help you decide whether it's appropriate for your setting and of sufficient quality to be used for effective decision making. The three major aspects of evidence that you need to critically appraise are:

- Validity - can you trust it?
- Impact - are the results clinically important?
- Applicability - can you apply it to your patient/service?
Who can help me?

Sometimes you don’t know what you don’t know! So, if you are not sure where or how to start with regards to **Evidence Based Practice** there are some knowledgeable and helpful people available within Community and Oral Health;

- The Community and Oral Health Librarian - Jana Waldmann is available Wednesday and Thursday’s. Jana can provide advice on how to structure your search for evidence, will conduct the search across healthcare databases and present the results in an EndNote library. She can be contacted via email Jana.Waldmann@health.qld.gov.au or phone 07 3360 4783. You can also find information and resources on the Community and Oral Health Library page [http://sas.health.qld.libguides.com/home](http://sas.health.qld.libguides.com/home)

- The Clinical Evidence Development Officer (CEDO) is a member of the Community and Oral Health Safety and Quality Unit with specialised skills and knowledge in evidence-based practice (EBP) and Knowledge Translation (KT). The CEDO can provide leadership, mentoring and assistance to staff to identify and use evidence-based practice within their teams and services through one-on-one meetings or group education sessions. The CEDO can be contacted via email COH-CEDO@health.qld.gov.au or phone 07 3360 4783.

Helpful Resources

**Internal:** A wide range of education/training sessions on EBP and research are available to all staff within Metro North Hospital and Health Service via videoconference and/or face to face sessions, and the intranet.


**External:** There are also some excellent external sources of information on EBP;

- The **University of Canberra Evidence Based Practice in Health** web guide: [https://canberra.libguides.com/c.php?q=599346&p=4149211](https://canberra.libguides.com/c.php?q=599346&p=4149211)

- The **Joanna Briggs** Approach to evidence based healthcare: [http://joannabriggs.org/jbi-approach.html](http://joannabriggs.org/jbi-approach.html)

- **Evidence Works** is an online toolkit developed for use in the NHS, the **Appraise** page [http://www.nhsevidencetoolkit.net/evidence-cycle/appraise/](http://www.nhsevidencetoolkit.net/evidence-cycle/appraise/) has some useful information and tools to assist in critical evidence appraisal.