



**Evidence-based practice (EBP) projects in nursing are done in abundance in acute care settings and in nursing programs. However, the transfer of knowledge from individual settings to publication isn't occurring at the same rate. The purpose of this article is to provide an easy to follow step-by-step approach to taking your EBP project and turning it into a publication. Additionally, I hope to inspire readers to write and submit their EBP project for publication.**

## From EBP Project to Publication in Ten Steps

Congratulations you have completed your evidence based practice (EBP) project! Now you must share the results with nursing peers, other scholars and the general public. This goal can be met by preparing a publishable article. The following steps can help you achieve this goal.

### Step 1: Determine Authorship

This step acknowledges the individuals who made significant contributions to the EBP project and writing of the article for publication. The first author should be the scholar who carried out the EBP project and wrote the article. If your EBP mentor is an established author they may want to be regarded as a senior author and as such her or his name would appear as the last author. Other authors can appear in alphabetical order. The earlier you decide on the authorship the better. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors has explicit authorship guidelines that can be accessed at [www.icmje.org/](http://www.icmje.org/) and may be helpful as a resource to guide authorship decisions. Most journals will ask for an account of what each author contributed to the article. It is not acceptable for an EBP mentor or advisor to be listed as an author just for supervising.

### Step 2: Determine Journal

This step involves matching the appropriate audience to the important points of your EBP project. Who needs to read your article and where will you find these readers? To find potential journals you can ask your EBP mentor or nursing peers who have published. Look at the reference list from your EBP project and select the journals that have published articles on your topic. Look closely at the last few issues of these journals and decide what would be the best match for your topic and desired audience. Search the journal to see when they last published something on your topic. If it was recent and matches your topic closely you may want to look at a different journal.

Open access online journals have flourished in the last few years and may be a venue to pursue for submitting your article for publication. Not all these journals are peer reviewed and some may charge you to upload your article. Make sure that if you pursue one of these publications you ensure that they are credible and have a good reputation in the industry. The advantages of open access online journals are that your work gets to the reader much faster than traditional peer-reviewed journals and it is free to read or download a copy of your article. Lastly, you should look at journal websites because they will have guidelines or information on queries and submissions as well as calls for publication on certain topics that may be planned in a dedicated issue that is applicable to your EBP project.

### Step 3: Query Journal Editor

A query letter is a short email to the journal editor describing your EBP project and asking if they would consider your

project for publication. A positive response from the editor means you should write and submit your article for possible publication in that journal. A negative response means that you should look for another journal to submit your article. Not all journals are receptive to queries and you can find this information in the author guidelines on the journal website. Furthermore, some journals spell out what they want in the query email. For example, *The American Journal of Nursing* strongly recommends that prospective authors submit a detailed query letter that includes the article idea and focus, an abstract, article outline, number of pages, projected date for submission, background and qualifications of other authors supporting, and the topic's relevance to nursing.

### Step 4: Review Journal Author Guidelines

Journal author guidelines are really submission guidelines that are very important to review before you begin the writing process because they provide the nitty-gritty details that you need to adhere to for your type of article. Most author guidelines include appropriate headings, specific font type and size, word limit, and reference style. Many EBP projects are quality improvement projects and therefore should follow the SQUIRE Guidelines ([squire-statement.org/](http://squire-statement.org/)) for writing a high quality article. Author guidelines are usually found on the journal's website. If you are unsure of any guideline ask for guidance from a published peer.

### Step 5: Review Past Issues of Journal

It is a good idea to review past issues of the journal to get a sense of the writing style and tone that you should consider before the start of writing your article. You can go to the library of the institution where you work or study and ask the librarian to assist with finding past issues of a journal. You can also go online to the journal website and you may be able to view past issues for free or with a subscription fee.

### Step 6: Organize, Get Ready to Write

A general template you can follow for the writing part of turning your EBP project into a publishable article is as follows:

- The title should identify that this is an EBP project and the practice problem being addressed.
- The abstract should include a summary of background literature and/or data related to the problem; aims of the EBP project; setting; inclusion/exclusion criteria; methods interventions used to address the practice problem; evaluation methods; conclusions, recommendations and/or implications.
- The body of the paper should:
  - Describe the problem that prompted the EBP project.
  - Give a short summary of the background literature on the problem and previous interventions used to address the problem.

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- Describe the planning process and baseline assessment data collected. Include whether or not your project had to be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board.
  - Describe the implementation phase of the project.
  - Describe the methods used to evaluate the effectiveness of the practice change.
  - Describe how the practice change is being sustained.
  - State conclusions, recommendations and/or implications related to your practice change.
- Journals generally ask the author to identify 3 to 5 keywords. Keywords help would-be readers interested in your topic locate your article in a database or online. You can ask the Health Sciences Librarian who helped you with your literature search for guidance on what keywords would have the best impact. You could also review the keywords used in the articles in your reference list for your EBP project.
  - Do a grammar and spell check because nothing is more annoying to an editor or reviewer than spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.
  - Check that references in text appear in reference list and vice versa.

### Step 7: Obtain Peer Feedback on Draft

Ask a colleague that has publishing experience to read your draft and provide feedback. As the primary author you are so wedded to your article that it is sometimes hard to see the forest for the trees. Your eyes can often skip over errors because they are so familiar with the content that is, or should be, there. Having a trusted colleague or mentor read your article should improve the quality of your writing prior to submission.

### Step 8: Revise Draft and Submit

Most journals in nursing have an online article submission process. The author guidelines should provide specific directions on how to submit the final article.

### Step 9: Prepare for Revisions and Resubmission

Journals have many peer reviewers who are usually not paid but are experts in some area that is pertinent to your article. Usually 2-3 reviewers read your article and provide feedback that the editor reviews and forwards on to you by email. There are three possible responses: your article

has been accepted for publication contingent upon addressing the reviewers' feedback; address the reviewers' feedback and resubmit for second review (there is no guarantee that a second submission will be accepted even if all the feedback is addressed); we are not interested in publishing your article at this time.

It is extremely rare to have no feedback from reviewers. If you are fortunate to get response 1 or 2 you should carefully address each comment and get feedback from your EBP mentor or trusted peer that you addressed it fully. It is important to make it easy for the reviewers to see how you addressed their feedback. An effective way to do this is to copy each comment and write how you addressed it in your manuscript and include page numbers where it was addressed. Once changes are made resubmit per journal guidelines. Prompt resubmission is very important and journal editors usually provide a timeframe for resubmission; if you miss the deadline you may lose the publishing opportunity. If you received a response of "we are not interested at this time," don't despair, go back to Step 2 and following the subsequent steps and this time around you will have experience and an article to rewrite for Step 6.

### Step 10: Relish your Success of Publishing your EBP project

The goal of publishing an article like this is that you got to step 10! Enjoy the success of being published in a peer-reviewed journal. Feel good about contributing to nursing scholarship and helping other disciplines. Continue to do EBP projects that address important practice problems and submit them for publication. ∞



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# Becoming a Green RN

By Kathy Murphy



Healthy environments promote healthy people. Maintaining the standards of environmental health is a core component of nursing, as noted in the American Nurses Association's Scope and Standards for Nursing Practice (2010) which articulates the nurse's environmental health role: "The registered nurse practices in an environmentally safe and healthy manner." In 2010, the National League for Nursing (NLN) recommended the inclusion of environmental health in nursing education, both for undergraduate and graduate programs. Recommendations from both of these nursing leadership organizations reflect our increasing understanding of the relationship between human health and environmental exposures, and the role of the RN in promoting and protecting the environments in which we live, learn, work, and play.

Registered nurses, recognized repeatedly as the most trusted profession (Gallup, 2014), have a unique opportunity to help patients make safer choices in their everyday lives to promote health for themselves, their families, and communities. For example, when working with patients with respiratory diseases such as asthma or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), a nurse should query the patient about exposure to substances that can aggravate delicate lung tissue in the home, work, and community settings. This list should include cleaning products, occupational exposures,

hobby supplies, and personal care products that may contain chemicals which are known irritants.

Every nursing student is taught that discharge teaching begins at admission. One large component of discharge teaching is medication reconciliation. It is vitally important that patients have clear instructions regarding any changes in their medications. Nurses must also include information related to the safe disposal of unwanted medications to avoid diversion (a term that refers to medications getting into the wrong hands and being used without a prescription) and accidental ingestion, and to avoid the disposal of unwanted medications "down the drain," which ultimately contributes to the contamination of water supplies. Nurses should assess resources for proper disposal of unwanted medications, which may include pharmacy take-back programs and community wide collections to provide this information to patients.

Nursing students can be role models in making simple choices that are safer and healthier for the environment. For example, by minimizing the use of bottled water and using a reusable glass or stainless steel water bottle, you can make a significant difference in many areas. Bottled water is expensive, and is surprisingly **less regulated** than tap water from public water supplies.

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