



ICNP and RNAO: Transforming Nursing Practice Worldwide

Using ICNP to support evidence based practice

Quality healthcare outcomes can be achieved when nursing practice is based on current knowledge (research evidence). The integration of best research evidence with patient/family preferences and clinical expertise is referred to as evidence-based practice. Best practice guidelines (BPGs) are recommendations for patient care that are based on high quality research evidence. BPGs are distributed in length text documents. A technology-based knowledge translation strategy involves converting BPG recommendations into actionable nursing intervention statements and embedding these within Electronic Health Records (EHR). These embedded statements can be represented or mapped to an agreed nursing terminology for standardisation and reuse.

The International Classification for Nursing Practice (ICNP), a product of the International Council of Nurses (ICN), is an agreed upon terminology or dictionary of concepts that enables nurses to describe and report their practice in a consistent way. The resulting information can be used reliably to support nurses' clinical practice and decision-making, as well as to inform nursing education and health policy.

RNAO Evidence-Based Order Sets

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) is the professional voice of Registered Nurses (RNs), Nurse Practitioner (NPs) and nursing students in Ontario, Canada. A team of experts from RNAO developed BPGs for various areas of nursing practice. To encourage use of the BPG, the nursing interventions were extracted and organised into nursing order sets (NOS) for each guideline. NOS direct clinical practice across the care continuum.

Standardising and Encoding Order Sets

To optimise the integration of NOS within EHRs, RNAO and ICN are collaborating to encode each NOS with the unique ICNP identifier for each intervention statement. Topics include: hypertension, diabetic foot ulcers, and smoking cessation. The use of ICNP-encoded NOS promotes safe, high quality care and facilitates the future extraction of meaningful nursing data from the EHR.

RNAO is launching a peer-led mentorship project, funded by Canada Health Infoway that will showcase the impact of using evidence-based ICNP-encoded NOS embedded within EHRs. It is anticipated that this project will demonstrate the impact of using the ICNP-encoded sets to automate the extraction and aggregation of anonymised data for analysis.

Besides their use in planning, delivering and evaluating nursing care, the data accessible through technology-enabled implementation of ICNP-encoded NOS will be beneficial for financial forecasting; analysis of patient/organisational and health system outcomes; and policy development. The RNAO ICNP-encoded order sets are significant to nursing and health outcomes as they promote evidence-based practice, reduce variability in care, and influence patient outcomes' optimisation.

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