Implementing Euro PEPs – Workshops help nurses put evidence into practice

Euro PEPs (Putting Evidence into Practice) are a set of evidence-based practice interventions, designed to help nurses improve their use of research evidence in their clinical practice. Each one provides a concise summary of recent evidence as well as expert opinion. They have been translated into five European languages and can be downloaded free at http://www.cancernurse.eu/education/europeps.html.

Workshops on Euro PEPs have been held in Brussels over the last few years. Here, some who attended describe here their experiences of trying to bring about change when they returned to their working environment.

Beatrix Kirchhofer, Tumourbiology Centre, Freiburg, Germany: ‘A good opportunity’
We were provided with background information on the development of the PEPs and Euro PEPS, and were introduced to an implementation tool, PICO.

When we returned to the Tumourbiology Centre in Freiburg, we started comparing the actual practice of treating lymphoedema at our hospital against what is recommended by EONS’ Euro PEPs. Our intention was to implement the lymphoedema PEP in Germany, so we arranged a multidisciplinary meeting with nurses, physicians and physiotherapists who do lymphatic drainage at our institution. In the beginning, there was some resistance from physicians and physiotherapists, because the treatment of lymphoedema is mainly their area. However, for nurses it is important to know the best evidence for advising patients in the right way. After a while, the physiotherapists warmed to the project, and provided all their information material. Furthermore, they invited me to their patients’ consulting sessions.

The treatment of lymphoedema in the Tumourbiology Centre is already evidence based, so there is not a lot to change. However, up till now, nurses have not been very well informed about the therapy done at their institution. The next step will be to give the information to nurses in in-house seminars and information flyers.

In my opinion, the EONS project around the Euro PEPs is a good opportunity to develop evidence-based nursing in daily practice.

Marjana Bernot and Katarina Lokar, Institute of Oncology Ljubljana, Slovenia: ‘Making changes step by step’
Managing the side effects of cancer treatment is a basic issue in cancer nursing care and is becoming more and more complex. The PEP approach can help the practice of evidence-based cancer nursing and Euro PEPs are a good introduction for the European cancer nursing community. One of the main challenges in Slovenian cancer nursing is how to introduce evidence-based practice into cancer care, as nurses are still practising care that is largely based on traditional and experience-based nursing knowledge. There are different reasons for this including the knowledge gap in research skills, the lack of confidence and authority in the research arena, limitation in English proficiency, and lack of skills to research literature. There are also some organisational barriers and fear of change.

At the Institute of Oncology Ljubljana, Slovenia, we saw the Euro PEPs as the golden opportunity to improve our practice, to provide higher quality nursing care with better decisions, to provide nursing care based upon evidence and clinical expertise, and to effectively plan the prevention and treatment of side effects and symptoms – so we joined the project.

The second Euro PEPs workshop in Brussels in October 2013 was very useful. We learned to “be persistent and make practice changes step by step but contin-
The PEP resources give you the ability to think big, start small and build evidence-based patient care.

Johan De Munter, Ghent University Hospital Oncology Centre, Belgium: A fantastic tool!
This high-quality, intensive, two-day workshop gave us the opportunity to learn, change, exchange experiences and share perspectives. Soon afterwards, we were eager to start using the PEP tools, such as PICO, and decided to work on peripheral neuropathy, a common symptom in our daily nursing practice of haematology. We had no clear agreements about management guidelines for this symptom and no assessment tool available, and we also did not validate assessments, which occasionally resulted in conflicting results.

We started our project by creating a ‘mind map’, where we tried to bring together all the elements such as population, characteristics, stakeholders and current management of peripheral neuropathy. Implementing evidence-based guidelines normally takes a lot of time, but thanks to the PEP tool, we could give immediate feedback to all the stakeholders, thus saving time to implement the guidelines.

The implementation process was not always easy, as there are always “believers” and “non-believers”, and change is difficult. But despite all these arguments, we believe evidence-based practice is important for patient care and can empower nurses and their role. And, in the end, we managed to disseminate the information and resources of Euro PEPs to 50 nurses from different hospitals in Slovenia as part of a seminar in October 2014 organised by the Slovenian Oncology Nursing Society.

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The implementation process was not always easy, as there are always “believers” and “non-believers”, and change is difficult. But despite all these arguments, we believe in the power of the PEP tools, because it has a strong evidence-based case. It gives you the ability to keep it simple and do a lot of work in a short time. The PEP resources can be used to plan patient care, education, quality improvement and research. It gives you the ability to think big, start small and build evidence-based patient care.

Thanks to EONS for creating the opportunity and this fantastic tool!