

Need to Know

Utilizing Information in Practice

Is This the Truth

There has been information in the news lately about the relationship between maternal diet during pregnancy and development of childhood asthma.

The truth?

A group of researchers in the Netherlands published a study in April 2008. They studied the diets of a birth cohort of 4,146 pregnant women, inquiring about consumption of fruits, vegetables, fish, eggs, milk, milk products, nuts and nut products.

The children were then examined over the next 8 years. Data was obtained for 2,832 children. The only food that had a significant (remember this means based on statistical analysis) effect on development of asthma was nut products (like peanut butter). The nuts in pure form did not have such an effect.

So does this mean that pregnant women should avoid nut products? Perhaps, however more study is required

The women whose children developed asthma ate nut products on a daily basis. And, as always, other variables must be considered, such as age of the mother, environment, general health, genetics and any preexisting conditions. None the less, it is an interesting study.

Willers, S., Wijga, A., Brunekreef, B., Kerkhof, M., Gerritsen, J., Hoekstra, M., deJongste, J., & Smit, H. (2008). Maternal food consumption during pregnancy and longitudinal development of childhood asthma. *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, 178, 124-131.



Utilizing Information in Practice
Internet Training for Missouri's
Healthcare Professionals
A National Library of Medicine Grant
(<https://www.phn.missouri.edu/>)

A program of the University of Missouri
Sinclair School of Nursing in partnership
with the MU Health Sciences Library.
Funded by the National Library of Medicine

Historical Spotlight



Commissioned Corps inspecting immigrants at Ellis Island, 1904.



Commissioned Corps researchers today.

United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps

Did you know that the US Public Health Service enlists uniformed members? The corps originated in the Marine Hospital Service as a system reform in 1871. The corps was formalized with legislation in 1889, following major epidemics of small pox, yellow fever and cholera. Corps members worked to manage disease outbreak, and later began to inspect arriving immigrants in the early 20th century. In the 1930's the corps added professional health care providers to its ranks. Today, there are 6000 active duty corps members.

Need to Know Utilizing Information in Practice

Search Tips

Quick Review of the Research Process

In this issue we're going to take a few steps back and look at the bigger picture of research. When doing research – in this case defined as finding information to answer a question – you are basically following these steps:

1. Defining the problem or question
2. Finding the answer(s)
3. Implementing the answer
4. Evaluating the process

Defining the question: This first step is key; it will determine where you will look for information and what kind of information you will find. What is the specific problem? For example, are you *preventing* or *treating* head lice infestations? What population does it concern? What outcomes are you looking for? You may have to redefine your question as you go along.

Finding the answer: Your question will dictate the type of resource you need to use. You might need to search PubMed to find out what's been published on this topic – refer to our previous columns for search tips! You might need to go to a site such as FedStats.gov to find numbers. Remember, a medical librarian can help you tremendously at this stage.

Keep in mind that you might not find an answer. Not every question has been researched by someone. In this case, you may either choose to do some primary research yourself or you may choose to rely on a trusted authority in that area.

Implementing the answer: Take a look at what is being done in your organization and see how it matches with the answer you found. You might need to create a survey and ask your colleagues what they do: e.g., if a student has lice do you send them home? With the information gathered from step two and from this step, you can now create a proposal of what should be the best practice at your institution. You will of course need to get approval and buy-in from your administrators and colleagues. However, having research to back up your proposal makes it much easier to get it accepted.

Evaluating the process: The final step is all about evaluation. Look back and see in which steps you did well, and with which steps you need more assistance. Also, it is good to evaluate how well changes were implemented and how effective they've been.

The idea of 'research' can cause most of us to blanch. Yet it needn't be a terrifying experience. Rather, it's a process of asking questions, seeking the best answer and then putting it in practice. Utilizing available information sources and resource personal along the way will make the process go more smoothly.

Website

New Age and Natural: Complementary and Alternative Medicine

According to a nationwide government survey released in December 2008, approximately 38 percent of U.S. adults aged 18 years and over and approximately 12 percent of children use some form of Complementary and Alternative Medicine. If such a significant percentage of the population is using these treatments and remedies, understanding them and their implications for practice becomes even more important.

One resource for learning more about various complementary and alternative practices is NCCAM – The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/>). This website is a great gateway to scientific information about the different practices and supplements involved. There are easy to read articles about specific topics such as Acupuncture, Black Cohosh, Meditation and Echinacea. Each article contains a comprehensive coverage of the topic. For instance, an article on Chiropractic includes such subjects as "What to Expect From Chiropractic Visits", "Side Effects and Risks", "Regulation", and "Insurance Coverage". In addition, there are several articles on how to be an informed consumer, covering such topics as how to select a practitioner, the use of CAM with children, how to pay for CAM treatments and how to talk with your physician about your use of CAM.

Other websites you may find helpful for information on Complementary and Alternative Medicine are:

MedlinePlus (www.medlineplus.gov): Herbs and Supplements Section in the Drug Section which is evidence-based. Also a good search term is Alternative Medicine as well as the more specific terms such as Acupuncture, Massage, etc.

DIRLINE (<http://dirline.nlm.nih.gov/>): A directory of health organizations and research resources.

NIH Office of Dietary Supplements (<http://dietary-supplements.info.nih.gov/>): Includes fact sheets on various dietary supplements, vitamin and mineral supplements and botanical supplements, materials on informed decision-making, nutrition recommendation, and consumer safety. Links to more agencies dealing with CAM can be found at <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/links/>.

Announcement!

If you have not completed the NLM surveys, please give us your feedback. Visit our website at <https://www.phn.missouri.edu/survey.aspx> and click on the workshop you attended: Consumer Websites workshop or Professional Databases workshop, If you attended both workshops, please complete both surveys.

Please evaluate our Need to Know newsletter by visiting our website at <https://www.phn.missouri.edu/newsletter.aspx> and clicking on Evaluate Newsletter.

This information is very valuable to us. It helps us report back to our funders and helps us lay the groundwork for additional grants.