

Characteristics of Evidence Based Practice (EBP), Quality Improvement (QI), and Research Projects

Evidence-based Practice

- Goal is to find existing research that demonstrates which policy, practice, or procedure is the best known way to produce a specific outcome in a specific population.
- Asks “Does our current policy, practice, or standard operating procedure reflect the best available evidence?”
- If the best practice differs from the organization’s current practice, the organization adopts the best practice and evaluates whether outcomes improve after the change.

Quality Improvement

- Goal is to improve patient outcomes by methodically identifying areas where performance falls short of the standards set by the organization.
- Asks “Are we optimally performing our current policy, practice, or procedure when we deliver care?”
- QI projects use evidence from the literature to implement interventions aimed at improving performance to meet the standard (e.g., staff education, workflow redesign, revised communications, etc.), and then evaluates whether the intervention improved performance.

Research

- Goals may be to describe a phenomenon, develop or test a new method or hypothesis, or evaluate the implementation of a new method.
- Research is any systematic investigation designed to contribute to generalizable knowledge. Methods vary depending on the aims of the study.
- Asks questions such as “Is one policy, practice, or procedure superior to another for achieving an outcome?” or “What are factors and processes that lead to an outcome?”

Differentiating EBP and QI from Research

The criteria and rationale, which are based on federal guidelines and institutional policy, are described below.

procedure is not yet known, it is ethical to assign some individuals to receive one and some to receive another through randomization or other means of assignment to a control group.

Since *EBP* and *QI* projects implement and optimize policies, practices, or procedures that have already been shown to be superior for achieving an outcome, EBP and QI projects generally will not include randomization or other means of assignment to a control group. EBP and QI projects typically employ a pre-post design to compare outcomes before and after the best policy, practice, or procedure is implemented or optimized.