

Critical Appraisal to Clinical Recommendation

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Context: Evidence based practice (EBP) is the framework the 21st century health care community is embracing in order to improve quality of patient care. Students entering the practice of Athletic Trainers in 2014 are expected to frame their practice more deliberately in terms of outcomes rather than process. It is therefore the responsibility of educators, through curriculum, to engage students towards adopting EBP into their practices. Objective: The primary objectives of this presentation are to successfully implement teaching strategies which facilitate the learning of the critical appraisal process, (2) evaluation of a non-randomized control trial; (3) determine level of evidence, strength of recommendation, and a clinical bottom line that can be used to inform clinical practice by students of Athletic Training. Background: As consumers within an evidence based practice environment, students need to be able to formulate sound clinical questions, locate relevant literature, critically appraise the literature, and reflect and determine if the evidence affects their practice. As a way to help students evaluate the literature in terms of validity and reliability the PEDrO scale can be used to appraise randomized control trials. When locating resources, not all topic areas have RCT's that are applicable, therefore students also need a basic strategy from which to assess journal articles, specifically cohort studies or outcomes studies. A literature review worksheet will be discussed as a tool to help students appraise the literature. The next step is to take that information and make a clinical recommendation based on the findings. The clinical recommendation answers the clinical question and directly relates to how the information will affect or change clinical practice. The presentation of this teaching strategy will contribute to the body of knowledge which currently exists pertaining to active learning and EBP across all disciplines. Assessing and sharing the active learning practices accelerates the body of knowledge related to successful pedagogies. Description: The presentation will begin with an outline and definition of the critical appraisal process. Next a hands-on demonstration of two different appraisal tools will be discussed to show clinicians where key information can be found and used from the literature to develop a clinical bottom line. The first strategy discussed will be an instructor generated document to appraise non-randomized control trials. The presentation will conclude with showing how from the literature clinicians can develop a clinical recommendation and how the information can be used to inform their practice. Clinical Advantages: Students actively learn how to find relevant literature and critically analyze the literature. The ability to decipher the research then correlates with clinical practice and patient goals and outcomes to be used within athletic training practice. Conclusion(s): Once a student finds relevant research, they need to have strategies to assess validity and reliability of the literature to make an informed clinical recommendation. With the wealth of scientific literature available, students need to have usable strategies that allow them to make sound clinical recommendations and improve patient outcomes. Key words: evidence based practice, Critical Appraised Topic (CAT), critical thinking, education.