

Google it! Making Sense of Information Literacy and Evidence-based Practice

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Abstract

When it comes to looking up information, many people turn to Google. It is, after all, the most popular search engine worldwide, and it houses an enormous amount of data. In this context, information literacy is crucial. Literacy in the information age means having access to and competence in evaluating information. It involves critical thinking skills and the ability to assess the reliability of sources or databases. Yet, it does not stop there because evidence-based practice is another key concept in information literacy. The process of basing one's choices on available data is what this term alludes to. Coming from the health sector, this is critical, as it impacts the consumers of healthcare services and, to some extent, the population's health. Bridging the gap entails collaboration between information scientists and health practitioners.

Making sense of information literacy and evidence-based practice

The capacity to locate, evaluate, and apply information effectively is information literacy (Loertscher et al., 2021). It requires recognizing the source of information, evaluating its veracity and significance, and using it ethically and responsibly. In the digital age, where information is continuously flowing in from all angles, information literacy is critical. It is more crucial than ever to be able to tell the difference between trustworthy and untrustworthy sources and to use information ethically and responsibly.

Meanwhile, evidence-based practice is a concept used by many professions, but what exactly does it mean? Evidence-based practice in healthcare refers to using information from research studies to make patient care decisions (Black et al., 2015; Colet et al., 2020). This means that healthcare practitioners use research findings to select the best course of therapy for their patients instead of relying on personal opinion or tradition. This might be challenging because it frequently contradicts healthcare practitioners' gut instincts. However, it is crucial to remember that not all treatments work for all patients and that we must always be open to challenge our preconceptions and try new things based on evidence.

To what extent are they connected? In nursing, evidence-based practice is linked to information literacy, in that both focus on utilizing information (Hicks et al., 2022). The ability to locate, analyze, and ethically apply information is what we mean when we talk about "information literacy." The term "evidence-based practice" refers to a healthcare decision-making method grounded in empirical data. Both of these ideas are significant in today's world, where information is easily accessible but frequently unreliable due to the prevalence of the Internet. It is more important than ever to be able to evaluate information critically and make decisions based on solid evidence and information acquired.

However, it is important to note that library services have an impact on promoting information literacy and evidence-based practice (Järvinen et al., 2019). It requires the availability of state-of-the-art infrastructures. Also, students and staff must have access to quality journals and databases or services that the library has to offer. And its key functions should be user-friendly, similar to how Google works, and must be a go-to for many individuals. Meanwhile, Järvinen and colleagues (2019) noted a low subscription to international nursing databases in Kazakhstan. After all, when one cannot access the library, a quick remedy is to Google it!

In the digital age, information literacy is more vital than ever. There are various advantages to information literacy (Sun et al., 2022). It assists us in making better decisions and discerning between fact and fiction by allowing us to swiftly and efficiently find the information we require. Information literacy teaches us how to use data ethically and responsibly. Evidence-based practice, on the other hand, has numerous advantages (Black et al., 2015; Colet et al., 2020). First, it assures that we are making judgments based on the best evidence available. Second, it assists us in ensuring that our therapies are effective and that our patients receive the greatest potential outcome. Third, it promotes research and collaboration, which helps us continuously improve our care quality.

So, how can you begin incorporating information literacy and evidence-based practice into your work? Here are a few pointers:

1. Apply information literacy principles to your work by embodying an inquiring mind. Once you have a fundamental grasp of ideas, consider using them in your studies and work. See how gathering information from reputable sources and weighing the evidence can influence your judgment. One possible action is to utilize validated tools to evaluate information from a website (Allison et al., 2019; Ayani et al., 2020; Elling et al., 2007)
2. When you need assistance, ask for it. Collaborating with information scientists or librarians is a great way to begin too. Their role must be identified when working on literature reviews. Ask your colleagues for advice or look up resources online if you need assistance locating trustworthy sources or comprehending evidence-based practice. I had such an experience with this, seeking assistance from a colleague at Joanna Briggs Institute in Australia (Colet et al., 2020).
3. Educate yourself on the fundamentals of information literacy and evidence-based practice. However, it's hard to know where to start with so much information. Try reading some resources, such as guides developed by librarians and researchers. Another example is the collaboration between faculty and librarians in developing a program for students; success stories on this matter have already been published elsewhere (Anders, 2021).

Conclusion

Together with information scientists, we are constantly working to improve people's ability to understand and use the information available and to guide them to the most relevant and reliable sources. The ability to analyze sources and judge whether or not they are reputable is becoming increasingly vital in a world where information is so easily accessible online.

While Google is a fantastic resource, it is not the enemy. Instead, users should remember that not all information found online is true or accurate. Learning to assess a source's reliability before deciding to use it in your practice or research is crucial.

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