Nursing Informatics Entry to Practice Competencies: What Does it Mean for Nursing Education and Practice?

Trends and Issues in Nursing Informatics Column

By Melanie Neumeier RN MN

> Melanie Neumeier is an Assistant Professor in the BScN Program at MacEwan University in Edmonton, AB. Her research interests include integrating new technologies into nursing education and interdisciplinary collaboration in enhancing evidence-informed nursing practice. Melanie first became interested in nursing informatics through a nursing informatics course she took in her MN program at Memorial University in Newfoundland, and has since continued that interest in her research, her writing, and her teaching.

COLUMN

A solid foundation in nursing informatics (NI) has always been an asset in traversing the ever-changing landscape of nursing education and practice. However, with the introduction of NI competencies into the entry-to-practice competency profile for Canadian RNs, NI has changed from a nice to have addition to a nurse's foundational knowledge base into an essential nursing practice requirement.

CASN (2015) has identified three competencies for registered nurses that are each supported by several assessable indicators. The registered nurse:

1. Uses relevant information and knowledge to support the delivery of evidence-informed patient care.
2. Uses ICTs in accordance with professional and regulatory standards and workplace policies.
3. Uses information and communication technologies in the delivery of patient/client care.

These competencies represent the minimum NI knowledge and skills required by registered nurses, and they all fall under the overarching competency that the registered nurse "uses information and communication technologies to support information synthesis in accordance with professional and regulatory standards in the delivery of patient/client care" (CASN , 2015, p.5).

According to CASN (2015) the introduction of NI entry-to-practice competencies is part of promoting a culture within Canadian nursing that "embraces the integration of nursing

informatics in curricula and professional practice" (p.1). To support that integration CASN has released two companion documents to the NI entry to practice competencies; Consumer Health Solutions: A Teaching and Learning Resource for Nursing Education (2016) and the Nursing Informatics Teaching Toolkit (2013).

The Nursing Informatics Teaching Toolkit is designed for nursing faculty and is organized around the three NI entry-to-practice competencies. For each competency the kit summarizes information that faculty members would need to know to teach that competency, and then provides tools like PowerPoint slides, case studies, and quizzes that can be integrated into the instructor's pre-existing lesson plans (CASN, 2013). This tool kit also provides suggestions for articles, books, and websites that provide information on specific aspects of NI or insights on how to best facilitate NI learning.

The resource, Consumer Health Solutions: A Teaching and Learning Resource for Nursing Education (CASN, 2016) is again designed for nursing faculty to help support the integration of digital health content into nursing education. This resource is divided into six main sections, each of which details a key area of consumer health solutions.

1. Finding health information and resources on the internet;
2. Using wearable health and fitness trackers;
3. Health-related smartphone apps;
4. Virtual communities;
5. Patient portals;
6. Personal health records

Each of these sections includes background information and learning activities that can help integrate the content into nursing curricula and address specific NI competency indicators.

Both of these documents were created to help nurse educators and practitioners to integrate the NI competencies into their practice, and they are not the only resources available. Over the next several issues of this column, I plan to discuss some of the unique ways that Canadian nurses are meeting the NI entry-to-practice competencies, the issues they are facing, and the resources they find most helpful. I hope that you will join me for what should be an interesting discussion on the trends and issues in nursing informatics.

References:

CASN. (2013). *Nursing Informatics Teaching Toolkit.* Retrieved from www.casn.ca

CASN. (2015). *Nursing Informatics Entry to Practice Competencies for Registered Nurses*. Retrieved from www.casn.ca

CASN. (2016). *Consumer Health Solutions: A Teaching and Learning Resource for Nursing Education*. Retrieved from: www.casn.ca

OUR SPONSORS

Visit the Nursing Informatics Learning Center for resources, courses, news, and other informatics related content.