

**LEARNING ACTIVITY:  
FORMULATING SEARCHABLE, ANSWERABLE CLINICAL QUESTIONS**

**Scenarios and Question Templates for Asking PICO Questions\***

**Purpose:** To practice formulating various types of clinical questions in order to locate evidence that will provide answers.

**Questions of Therapy**

“Urinary tract infection is the most common hospital acquired infection” (Brosnahan, Jull & Tracy, 2004). You note that the number of UTI’s in patients who have had urethral catheters for short term voiding problems on your unit is 20% over the benchmark. The protocol for catheter insertion and care includes use of sterile technique for catheter insertion and hygienic procedures. You have read that there are a variety of catheters available and wonder if one kind is better than another for reducing the incidence of infection. You decide to search the literature to find the best evidence to answer this question.

**In \_\_\_\_\_, what is the effect of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ compared with \_\_\_\_\_?**

You have cared for several patients, particularly women, who have venous leg ulcers. “Venous insufficiency has been shown to be associated with increased hydrostatic pressure in the veins of the leg...” (Cullum, Nelson, Fletcher, & Sheldon, 2005, p. 2). Several types of external compression have been used as a therapy for these ulcers. Different physicians order different types of compression bandages, which provide varying amounts of force (i.e., level of compression) to the involved limbs. You begin to wonder which, if any, of these types and levels of compression are more effective than others in achieving ulcer healing.

**In \_\_\_\_\_, what is the effect of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ compared with \_\_\_\_\_?**

**Questions of Secondary Prevention**

Recent reports in your institution show that the percentage of patient falls has increased steadily over the passed year. You have read that at least 30% of people over 65 who live independently in the community fall each year (Gillespie, Gillespie, Robertson, Lamb, Cumming & Rowe, 2003), but are not sure about the benchmark statistics for hospitals. You know that there is a protocol for fall prevention in your agency, which mainly involves keeping side rails up on the beds of patients who are judged to be at risk for falls. You wonder if there are other preventative nursing measures you can provide to your patients, which have been effective in preventing falls. You

decide to search the literature to determine if there is evidence to support the effectiveness of a program of risk assessment and intervention, and what that might include.

**For \_\_\_\_\_, does the introduction of \_\_\_\_\_  
reduce the risk of \_\_\_\_\_ compared with \_\_\_\_\_?**

### **Questions of Meaning**

You care for children (most under the age of 16) who have various types of cancer. Many of these children have a terminal prognosis. In order to provide the best emotional support for these children that you can, you want to better understand how they feel about their medical diagnosis and think about their life.

**How do \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ perceive  
\_\_\_\_\_?**

### References

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