

Chapter 1- Introduction to Nursing Research

1. Which of the following groups would be *best* served by the development of a scientific base for nursing practice?
 - A) Nursing administrators
 - B) Practicing nurses
 - C) Nurses' clients
 - D) Health care policymakers

Ans: C

Feedback:

Nursing research is systematic inquiry designed to develop trustworthy evidence about issues of importance to nurses and their clients. Nurse leaders recognize the need to base specific nursing decisions on evidence indicating that the decisions are clinically appropriate, cost-effective, and result in positive client outcomes. Although all of the people listed would benefit from the development of a scientific base for nursing practice, ultimately it is the clients themselves who would most benefit, as they would then receive the most appropriate and most effective care.

2. An especially important goal for the nursing profession is to do which of the following?
 - A) Conduct research to better understand the context of nursing practice
 - B) Establish a solid base of evidence for practice through disciplined research
 - C) Document the role nursing serves in society
 - D) Establish research priorities

Ans: B

Feedback:

Nurses are increasingly expected to understand and undertake research and to base their practice on evidence from research. Evidence-based practice is the use of the best evidence in making patient care decisions and typically comes from research conducted by nurses and other health-care professionals. All of the other answers are possible goals for the nursing profession, but none is as important as establishing evidence for practice.

3. Which of the following is a fundamental belief of those who hold to the constructivist paradigm?
- A) A fixed reality exists in nature for humans to understand
 - B) The nature of reality has changed over time
 - C) Reality is multiply constructed and multiply interpreted by humans
 - D) Reality cannot be studied empirically

Ans: C

Feedback:

In the constructivist paradigm, it is assumed that reality is not a fixed entity but is rather a construction of human minds—and thus “truth” is a composite of multiple constructions of reality. However, constructivists do believe that reality can be studied empirically. Belief in a fixed reality that exists in nature for humans to understand would be an example of a positivist belief, not a constructivist one. The constructivist belief does not hold so much that the nature of reality has changed over time as that it has always been constructed by human minds.

4. Which of the following is a fundamental belief of those who hold to the positivist paradigm?
- A) The researcher is objective and independent of those being studied
 - B) The researcher cannot interact with those being studied
 - C) The researcher instructs those being studied to be objective in providing information
 - D) The distance between the researcher and those being researched is minimized to enhance the interactive process

Ans: A

Feedback:

In the positivist paradigm, it is assumed that there is an objective reality and that natural phenomena are regular and orderly. In the constructivist paradigm, it is assumed that reality is not a fixed entity but is rather a construction of human minds—and thus “truth” is a composite of multiple constructions of reality.

5. Which of the following attributes is *least* characteristic of the traditional scientific method?
- A) Control over external factors
 - B) Systematic measurement and observation of natural phenomena
 - C) Testing of hunches deduced from theory or prior research
 - D) Emphasis on a holistic view of a phenomenon, studied in a rich context

Ans: D

Feedback:

Quantitative research (associated with positivism) involves the collection and analysis of numeric information. Quantitative research is typically conducted within the traditional scientific method, which is systematic and controlled. Quantitative researchers base their findings on empirical evidence (evidence collected by way of the human senses) and strive for generalizability beyond a single setting or situation. Constructivist researchers emphasize understanding human experience as it is lived through the collection and analysis of subjective, narrative materials using flexible procedures; this paradigm is associated with qualitative research.

6. Empiricism refers to which of the following?
- A) Making generalizations from specific observations
 - B) Articulating a study purpose in terms of an appropriate classification system
 - C) Gathering evidence about real-world phenomena through the senses
 - D) Verifying the assumptions on which the study was based

Ans: C

Feedback:

Empiricism is gathering and analyzing evidence through their senses. Quantitative research involves the collection and analysis of numeric information. Quantitative research is typically conducted within the traditional scientific method, which is systematic and controlled. Quantitative researchers base their findings on empirical evidence and strive for generalizability beyond a single setting or situation. Constructivist researchers emphasize understanding human experience as it is lived through the collection and analysis of subjective, narrative materials using flexible procedures; this paradigm is associated with qualitative research.

7. Which of the following is a hallmark of the scientific method?

- A) Rigorous
- B) Holistic
- C) Systematic
- D) Flexible

Ans: C

Feedback:

Quantitative research is typically conducted within the traditional scientific method, which is systematic and controlled. Quantitative researchers base their findings on empirical evidence and strive for generalizability beyond a single setting or situation. Constructivist researchers emphasize understanding human experience as it is lived through the collection and analysis of subjective, narrative materials using flexible procedures; this paradigm is associated with qualitative research.

8. Which of the following limits the capacity of the scientific method to answer questions about humans?

- A) The necessity of departing from traditional beliefs
- B) The difficulty of accurately measuring complex human traits
- C) The lack of funding for research
- D) The shortage of theories about human behavior

Ans: B

Feedback:

Nursing research focuses on human beings, who are inherently complicated and diverse. The traditional scientific method typically focuses on a relatively small aspect of human experiences in a single study. Complexities tend to be controlled and, if possible, eliminated rather than studied directly, and this narrowness of focus can sometimes obscure insights.

9. The classic scientific method has its intellectual roots in which of the following?

- A) Positivism
- B) Determinism
- C) Constructivism
- D) Empiricism

Ans: A

Feedback:

In the positivist paradigm, it is assumed that there is an objective reality and that natural phenomena are regular and orderly. The related assumption of determinism refers to the belief that phenomena result from prior causes and are not haphazard. In the constructivist paradigm, it is assumed that reality is not a fixed entity but is rather a construction of human minds—and thus “truth” is a composite of multiple constructions of reality. Although the word empiricism has come to be allied with the classic scientific method, researchers in both traditions gather and analyze evidence empirically, that is, through their senses.

10. Constructivist qualitative research typically does which of the following?
- A) Involves deductive processes
 - B) Attempts to control the research context to better understand the phenomenon being studied
 - C) Involves gathering narrative, subjective materials
 - D) Focuses on numeric information

Ans: C

Feedback:

In the constructivist paradigm, it is assumed that reality is not a fixed entity but is rather a construction of human minds—and thus “truth” is a composite of multiple constructions of reality. In the positivist paradigm, it is assumed that there is an objective reality and that natural phenomena are regular and orderly. Constructivist researchers emphasize understanding human experience as it is lived through the collection and analysis of subjective, narrative materials using flexible procedures; this paradigm is associated with qualitative research. The other answers are truer of positivist, quantitative research.

11. Quantitative and qualitative research share which of the following features? Select all that apply.
- A) A desire to understand the true state of human affairs
 - B) An emphasis on formal measurement
 - C) A reliance on external evidence collected through the senses
 - D) Utility to the nursing profession

Ans: A, C, D

Feedback:

Both quantitative and qualitative research share a desire to understand the true state of human affairs, a reliance on external evidence collected through the senses, and utility to the nursing profession. However, quantitative, not qualitative, research emphasizes formal measurement.

12. Which of the following is a descriptive question that a qualitative researcher most likely would ask?

- A) What is the nature of this phenomenon?
- B) What is the average intensity of this phenomenon?
- C) How frequently does this phenomenon occur?
- D) What is the average duration of this phenomenon?

Ans: A

Feedback:

Description of phenomena is an important purpose of research. In descriptive studies, researchers count, delineate, and classify. Nurse researchers have described a wide variety of phenomena, such as patients' stress, health beliefs, and so on. Quantitative description focuses on the prevalence, size, and measurable aspects of phenomena. Qualitative researchers describe the nature, dimensions, and salience of phenomena

13. A researcher wants to investigate the effect of patients' body position on blood pressure. The study would most likely be of which type?

- A) Qualitative
- B) Quantitative
- C) Either quantitative or qualitative (researcher preference)
- D) Insufficient information to determine

Ans: B

Feedback:

Because this study would involve a measurable, numeric outcome—blood pressure—it should most likely be a quantitative study.

14. A researcher wants to explore the process by which men make decisions about treatment for prostate cancer. The researcher's paradigm is most likely which of the following?

- A) Positivism
- B) Determinism
- C) Empiricism
- D) Constructivism

Ans: D

Feedback:

As this study involves gathering subjective, non-measurable data, the researcher's paradigm is most likely constructivism. Positivism is not likely, as there is no emphasis on an objective, orderly reality. Determinism, which refers to the belief that phenomena result from prior causes and are not haphazard, is not pertinent here. Although the research will involve empiricism, or gathering information using the senses, this is not the primary paradigm.

15. Which of the following would be most strongly associated with cause-probing research?
- A) Identification
 - B) Description
 - C) Exploration
 - D) Explanation

Ans: D

Feedback:

A fundamental distinction that is especially relevant in quantitative research is between studies whose primary intent is to describe phenomena and those that are cause-probing. Specific purposes on the description/explanation continuum include identification, description, exploration, prediction/control and explanation. Many nursing studies can also be classified in terms of a key EBP aim: therapy/treatment/intervention; diagnosis and assessment; prognosis; etiology and harm; and meaning and process.

16. Nursing has experienced constant change over the past decades as a result of increased research. When determining best practices, nursing decisions should do which of the following? Select all that apply.
- A) Be based on tradition
 - B) Include holistic approaches
 - C) Be clinically appropriate
 - D) Be cost effective

Ans: C, D

Feedback:

Nurse leaders recognize the need to base specific nursing decisions on evidence indicating that the decisions are clinically appropriate, cost-effective, and result in positive client outcomes. Holistic treatments may be appropriate in some, but not all, circumstances. Tradition alone is an inadequate basis for practice.

17. Evidenced-based nursing primarily uses which of the following to answer clinical questions?
- A) Consulting an authority
 - B) Using intuition
 - C) Obtaining the newest research
 - D) Relying on experience

Ans: C

Feedback:

Nurses are increasingly expected to understand and undertake research, and to base their practice on evidence from research—that is, to adopt an evidence-based practice (EBP). EBP, broadly defined, is the use of the best evidence in making patient care decisions. Experience, intuition, and authority are not wholly ignored in the EBP process, but research is a priority.

18. The major difference between quantitative and qualitative research is that qualitative research seeks to find answers based on which of the following?

- A) Solid factual data
- B) Experiences or descriptions
- C) Etiology
- D) Systematic process

Ans: B

Feedback:

Human experiences, and people's descriptions and interpretations of these experiences, are the main focus of qualitative research. Systematic process, etiology, and factual data are more closely aligned with the quantitative tradition.

19. Which of the following research focuses is qualitative?

- A) Weekend and night outcomes of patients admitted to a specific hospital system's trauma departments
- B) Trends in hospitalizations of patients with antibiotic-resistant tuberculosis
- C) Predicting risks for serious complications with abdominal surgery
- D) Needs of nursing students living with chronic illness

Ans: D

Feedback:

Constructivist studies are heavily focused on understanding the human experience as it is lived, through the careful collection and analysis of qualitative materials that are narrative and subjective. Human needs, and individuals' perceptions of those needs, are a common focus of qualitative research. Outcomes, risk factors, and treatment modalities are often addressed with quantitative research.

20. When little is known about a phenomenon or the phenomenon is not clearly identified, the best type of research suited to uncover this is which of the following?

- A) Exploration
- B) Description
- C) Identification
- D) Prediction

Ans: C

Feedback:

Qualitative researchers sometimes study phenomena about which little is known. In some cases, so little is known that the phenomenon has yet to be clearly identified or named or has been inadequately defined. Identification is thus necessary. Exploration (which addresses causation), predication, and description would likely be subsequent efforts.

21. Consumers of research do which of the following?

- A) Design studies
- B) Undertake studies
- C) Produce research
- D) Read research

Ans: D

Feedback:

In the current EBP environment, every nurse is likely to engage in one or more activity along a continuum of research participation. At one end of the continuum are users (consumers) of nursing research—nurses who read research reports to keep up-to-date on findings that may affect their practice. EBP depends on well-informed nursing research consumers. At the other end of the continuum are the *producers of nursing research*: nurses who actively design and undertake studies.

22. When nurses rely primarily on tradition, they are most likely to do which of the following?

- A) Produce a precise range of answers
- B) Increase new knowledge
- C) Maintain an unbiased perspective
- D) Undermine effective problem solving

Ans: D

Feedback:

Tradition may undermine effective problem solving. There is growing concern that many nursing actions are based on tradition, custom, and “unit culture” rather than on sound evidence. This prevents the acceptance of new knowledge and increases bias and is unlikely to produce a precise range of answers.

23. A research nurse understands that evidenced-based practice in nursing does which of the following?

- A) Relies on tradition
- B) Consults recognized authorities
- C) Depends primarily on textbooks
- D) Is based on the latest research

Ans: D

Feedback:

EBP prioritizes research findings, which are found primarily in primary sources, such as journals, rather than in secondary sources, such as textbooks. It is not dependent on tradition or authority.

24. Non-research-based evidence includes which of the following? Select all that apply.

- A) Unit culture
- B) Nurse's experience
- C) Qualitative studies
- D) Trial and error

Ans: C

Feedback:

Clinical reports, experience and beliefs are non-research based sources of evidence, which are considered to be comparatively weak. Qualitative studies are research-based.