

Use of practice guidelines by nurses and allied professionals in cardiovascular care

The ESC guidelines summarise the latest evidence to help all members of the clinical multidisciplinary team to provide the best possible treatment strategies in typical patients suffering from a given disease. These strategies not only include the treatment but also cover potential benefits and risk related to the disease and the use of diagnostic and treatment procedures. Guidelines are an important mechanism of improving health care and patient outcomes, since these are built on Evidence Based Medicine. Therefore, the ESC Council on Cardiovascular Nursing and Allied Professions started an innovative project to encourage the use of practice guidelines by nurses and allied professionals in cardiovascular care. This project 'Be Guidelines Smart' was launched at the Council's annual conference, EuroHeartCare (14-15 June 2015) in Dubrovnik - Croatia.

Nurses and allied professionals are involved in writing and reviewing guidelines, but they also have a vital role in implementing these guidelines into daily practice. Nurses often spend a lot of time with the patient compared to other healthcare professionals, and have an opportunity to evaluate current care against guideline recommendations. Therefore, nurses play an important role as patient advocates. CCNAP aims to provide education and resources so that nurses are better informed about evidence based management of a disease (by means of using the guidelines), provide professional support to nurses by building their confidence, and provide interdisciplinary guidance to challenge the workplace culture.

The practice of cardiovascular nursing is constantly changing. These changes include modifications in the ESC guidelines, with a number of issues challenging us as we strive for excellence. Nursing leaders must confront these challenges on a daily basis and are passionate about and committed to continually strengthening the nursing practice for the delivery of excellent patient care. To help nurses implement guidelines in their every day practice, the ESC Council on Cardiovascular Nursing and Allied Professions developed the Guidelines Implementation Toolkit to raise awareness amongst nurses and increase their contribution to guidelines implementation. The Guidelines Implementation Toolkit is an educational and motivational aid for nurses and allied professionals working in clinical practice. The Council has developed a survey to investigate nurses' knowledge, attitudes and practice regarding clinical practice guidelines, and to find out to what extent nurses manage to implement the guidelines in their everyday care of patients and whether they are interested in introducing changes in accordance with the guideline recommendations. The Toolkit contains instructional videos, which aims to help cardiovascular nurses implement the guidelines in their daily practice. The nursing workforce issues, nursing leadership challenges, focus on quality, safety and evidence based practice, decreasing health disparities and creating patient partnerships; all must be addressed in order for us to succeed.

Be Guidelines Smart-Go to Work.



Assistant Professor Izabella Uchmanowicz

Member of the CCNAP National Societies Committee – Poland representative