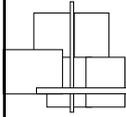


Session Three:



Research Problems, Purposes, and Hypotheses

1

Research Topics

- Major concepts
- Focused on key issues for practice, education, and administration
- Examples: chronic pain, acute pain, self-care, coping, health promotion, respiratory pathology, staffing, nursing shortage

2

What Is a Research Problem?

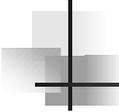
- Definition: area of concern; gap in the knowledge needed for practice
- Significance: current, important area of concern for profession
- Background: one or two key studies that have been conducted related to problem

3

Example Research Problem

- Nursing care in hospitals is extensive, provided by a variety of professionals, and extremely expensive. Nursing studies have shown that nursing care delivery changes affect staff and organizational outcomes, but the effects on client outcomes have not been studied sufficiently. (Blegen, Goode, & Reed, 1998)

4



Problem Statement

- Justification of need
 - Knowledge gap
 - Conflicting findings
 - Group of individuals not previously studied
- Current
- Significance for nursing

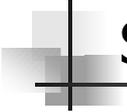
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Key Phrases for Problem

- Little is known about or few studies have been done regarding . . .
- Findings of previous studies are conflicting regarding . . .
- Hispanic or low income individuals have not been studied . . .

6



Sources of Problems

- Nursing practice
- Researcher and peer interaction
- Literature review
- Theory
- Research priorities

7



Purpose Statement

- Clear, concise statement
- Goal, aim, focus, or objective of the study
- Includes variables, population, and setting

8

Purpose and Type of Study

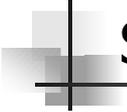
- The purpose of this study was to
 - Describe . . .
 - Determine differences between groups . . .
 - Examine relationships among . . .
 - Determine the effect of . . .

9

Example Research Purpose

- The purpose of this study was “to describe, at the level of the nursing care unit, the relationships among total hours of nursing care, registered nurse (RN) skill mix, and adverse patient outcomes.” (Blegen et al., 1998)

10



Study Outcomes

- The higher the RN skill mix, the lower the incidence of adverse occurrence on inpatient care units.

11



Examining Study Feasibility

- Time commitment
- Money commitment
- Researchers' expertise
- Availability of subjects, facility, and equipment
- Ethical considerations

12

Critiquing Problem and Purpose

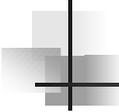
- Are the problem and purpose of the study clearly and concisely expressed?
- Does the purpose identify the variables, population, and setting of the study?
- Are the problem and purpose significant to generate nursing knowledge?
- Was it feasible for the researchers to study the problem and purpose identified?

13

Example Research Problem

- “500,000–1,000,000 people have leg ulcers at any one time . . . 60-70% patients have recurrent ulcerations . . . The average cost to heal a venous ulcer is \$1,950 with a range from \$784–\$6,449”... Adequate tissue perfusion is related to wound healing . . . Partial pressure of transcutaneous oxygen measurements predict wound healing in persons with impaired perfusion . . .

14



Example Research Problem

- Few data are available regarding the effect of this intervention on tissue oxygenation and wound perfusion in persons with venous ulcers." (Wipke-Tevis et al., 2001)

15



Critique of Research Problem

- Type of study?
- Research topics?
- Population?
- Setting?
- Significance?
- Clarity of problem?

16

Example Research Problem

- Type of study: quantitative quasi-experimental study
- Research topics: ulceration, tissue perfusion, transcutaneous oxygen, wound healing
- Population: patients with leg ulcers
- Setting: hospital

17

Example Research Purpose

- "The purpose of this study was to explore tissue oxygenation and perfusion in patients with venous ulcers." (Wipke-Tevis et al., 2001)
- Objective: "To determine the effect of position in combination with inspired oxygen on venous ulcers."

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Critique of Research Purpose

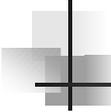
- Type of variables?
- Population and setting?
- Goal of study?
- Clarity of purpose statement?
- Link to problem statement?

19

Example Research Purpose

- Variables:
 - Independent variables: position and inspired oxygen
 - Dependent variable: ulcer perfusion
- Population and setting: hospitalized patients with leg ulcers

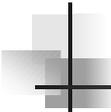
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Example Research Problem

- “Breast cancer is a significant health problem for midlife women, with an estimated 193,700 cases diagnosed in the United States in 2001 . . . Women with breast cancer therapy who experience chemotherapy induced premature menopause report more physical symptom distress and poorer sexual functioning than other breast cancer survivors . . .

21



Example Research Problem

- How young midlife women respond to drug induced premature menopause in the context of newly diagnosed early stage breast cancer and adjuvant chemotherapy is unknown.” (Knobf, 2002, pp. 9–10)

22

Critique of Problem

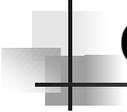
- Type of study: qualitative-grounded theory
- Research topics: premature menopause, breast cancer, chemotherapy
- Population: midlife women with breast cancer
- Setting: unknown, probably natural setting
- Significant, clearly stated problem

23

Example of a Research Purpose

- “The purpose of this study was to develop a substantive theory that would describe and explain women’s responses to chemotherapy induced premature menopause within the context of breast cancer.” (Knobf, 2002, p. 10)

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Critique of Research Purpose

- Research variable: women's response to chemotherapy-induced premature menopause
- Population: midlife women with breast cancer
- Goal: substantive theory development; clearly, concisely stated