

Editorial Desk

DOI: 10.21276/ijchmr.2016.2.3.01



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Evidence based medicine is an approach to the medical practice intended to optimize decision making by emphasizing the use of evidence from well designed and conducted research. It is being promulgated as the corner stone in the present era of patient care and decision making. The practice of evidence-based medicine is a process of lifelong, self-directed problem-based learning in which caring for one's own patients creates the need for clinically important information about diagnosis, prognosis, therapy and other clinical and health care issues. EBM tries to use evidence in an explicit fashion by quantifying benefits and harms using various concepts. The five EBM domains are diagnosis, prognosis, aetiology, treatment and cost-effectiveness.

Why is EBM important?

Knowledge translation – increasing the uptake of the best available evidence into practice – has always been a challenge. New types of evidence are being generated every day which can create changes in the way the patients are treated at different health care facilities. It is important that the treatment guidelines for the patients are

based on latest evidence based research and are supplemented by the clinical decision making expertise of the physician.

The EBM process

The patient	Start with the patient -- a clinical problem or question arises out of the care of the patient
The question	Construct a well built clinical question derived from the case. A good question consists of four components: PICO P: People I: Intervention C: Comparison between interventions O: Outcome
The resource	Select the appropriate resource(s) and conduct a search
The evaluation	Appraise that evidence for its validity (closeness to the truth) and applicability (usefulness in clinical practice)
The patient	Return to the patient -- integrate that evidence with clinical expertise, patient preferences and apply it to practice
Self-evaluation	Evaluate your performance with this patient

Overall, evidence based medicine is the concept of formalizing the scientific approach to the practice of medicine for identification of “evidence” to support our clinical decisions.

It requires an understanding of critical appraisal and the basic epidemiologic principles of study design, point estimates, relative risk, odds ratios, confidence intervals, bias and confounding. By using this information, clinicians can categorize evidence, assess causality and make evidence-based recommendations. Evidence-based medicine allows the analysis of complicated material so that best possible clinical decisions for the populations can be made.

Conflict of interest: Nil

Source of Support: Nil

EBM in recent times has emerged as a coherent approach for assessing different treatment options. Perhaps clinicians are now, more than ever, in a position to implement evidence at the point of contact with individual patients, ensuring that evidence is translated into practice. Its adoption, alongside health economics is the gold standard tool for provision of health services around the world in the present times. We all should make an endeavour to apply the reason and logic of EBM in our day to day practice, for making our decisions of patient care from both outcome and legal point of view.

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