

Basic Steps in Planning Nursing Research: From Question to Proposal (6th edition)

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This book would be of interest to anyone preparing a research proposal, in particular graduate or undergraduate students, or anyone who would like a sound guide for the process of developing a research proposal. With few texts that specifically address research methods and processes for dental hygiene, it is logical to turn to other health professions who study relatively similar phenomena in many cases. This nursing research text can serve as a valuable resource for dental hygienists as well as nurses.

This book is organized into 13 chapters and six appendices. Each chapter takes the reader through a different stage in the process of developing a research proposal, beginning with the first chapter considering 'How to Write a Researchable Question'. The authors discuss three levels of research studies, based on the amount of knowledge or theory about the topic under study, and suggest valuable steps for readers to take to articulate a clear researchable question. The first level of research has little or no literature available on the topic, and the purpose of this type of study is to describe the topic as it is. At the second level, there is some knowledge of the topic, but the purpose of the study is to determine if there is a statistical relationship among the variables of interest. At the third level, there is a great deal of knowledge and theory about the topic, and the purpose is to test the theory. These three levels of research studies form the framework for the text, and each stage of the research process is discussed within the context of each of these levels. Many suggestions are provided to aid the reader to refine their own research question.

In chapter two, the authors guide the reader through identifying the level of knowledge and theory about the topic, including searching the literature. They take the reader through steps to prepare an outline for reviewing the relevant literature

on the topic, and include examples of completed outlines for different levels of questions. Chapter three guides the reader through developing the elements of the research problem. This includes the theoretical or conceptual framework for the research study, and developing the argument for why the topic should be addressed, and why it should be addressed in the manner being proposed.

In chapter four, the authors guide the reader through the process of preparing a review of literature relevant to the research question. This chapter provides a very thorough discussion of the process and purpose of critiquing published literature. In chapter five, the authors proceed to discuss how to write the purpose statement for research questions at each of the three levels of studies, and further consider how to write a research hypothesis. Chapter six addresses the types of variables, and how to prepare the operational definitions for the variables under study. Numerous examples are provided to assist the reader. Chapter seven contains an excellent overview of research designs appropriate for each of the three levels of questions. Descriptive designs and experimental designs are discussed, as are issues of external and internal validity and measures to control bias and potential error. Chapter eight discusses sample selection for the various levels, and tables are provided to aid the reader. Chapter nine is about 'Selecting a Method to Answer the Question', and again tables are provided. The Recommended Readings section for this chapter is particularly extensive, to guide readers to more comprehensive writing on their selected research method.

In chapter ten, the authors discuss concerns about measurement error, and how to reduce the potential for this occurrence. A table addresses errors that may occur at each stage of the research process. This chapter includes a useful self-test and again, an extensive and up-to-date Recommended Reading list. Chapter eleven discusses issues of ethics in research, primarily from a North American perspective. It includes a table that identifies ethical principles involved with various research issues. Chapter twelve considers data analysis and includes numerous tables to aid the reader/researcher to select the appropriate statistical test for analysis of their particular

data set. Note that this is not a statistics text. The thirteenth and final chapter takes the reader through each of the steps of writing the research proposal.

An additional feature of this book that makes it highly recommended is the appendices. These include six complete research proposals, two for each of the levels of questions. The examples include different research designs, including a meta-analysis, and can be valuable to the reader as additional resources. The proposals include all necessary documentation, including research instruments such as questionnaires, and documents needed for ethics review.

This book is clearly written and very readable, almost conversational in style. Throughout the book, the authors have included examples from different research studies that have been published on a wide variety of topics, primarily in North American and European journals. Each chapter includes a selection of Recommended Readings for readers who wish to pursue further reading on a particular topic of interest.

I found this book very readable, and found it useful to help improve a recent research proposal I was preparing. The

authors take a thorough approach to the research process and provide readers with a useful reference that they will turn to time and again, as I do. I highly recommend it for graduate students as they prepare their research proposals for theses and dissertations, and believe undergraduate students would find it useful as well to help understand the research process. Instructors teaching research courses will also find it useful as a resource. This is one of those books that belongs on the bookshelf of everyone who produces or consumes research, and it will, as mine, become well-thumbed over time.

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