Supplement 6. Assessment of Publication Bias: Funnel Plots

Examination of ClinicalTrials.gov

We used our two main search term groups to search for clinical trials, type of nursing involvement, and disease of interest. For type of nursing, we investigated nurse’s role (n=82), nurse-led protocols (n=13), nurse-managed protocols (n=79), nurse-led clinics (n=30) and nurse-managed clinics (n=136). “Nurse’s roles” provided many off-topic entries. Appropriate entries under nurse-led protocols, nurse-managed protocols, and nurse-led clinics (all of which had substantial overlap) were 100 percent contained under the key phrase “nurse managed clinics” or NMC. Therefore, we examined the entries found by the following combinations: NMC and diabetes (n=40), NMC and hypertension (n=14), NMC and congestive heart failure (n=19), and NMC and hyperlipidemia (n=3). Of the 76 entries produced by this search strategy, one entry overlapped in all categories, leaving 74 unique entries of which

- 38 were not completed
- 14 were not an intervention of interest (usually the nurse did not titrate medications)
- 7 expanded the role of a professional other than nurse although nurses were involved
- 5 had publications already identified in our database
- 4 were not from a country of interest
- 4 were not a population of interest
- 2 were not a disease of interest

Thus, we concluded there is no evidence of publication bias from our search of clinicaltrials.gov on May 30, 2013.

Funnel Plots

To detect possible publication bias, we produced funnel plots for outcomes reported by at least 10 studies. Plots and evaluation are presented here.
Funnel plot for systolic blood pressure: indication of publication bias

Funnel plot for diastolic blood pressure: no indication of publication bias
Funnel plot for cholesterol at goal: no clear indication of publication bias

Funnel plot for blood pressure at goal: some asymmetry; no clear indication of publication bias