Teaching Nursing Informatics:
Use of the Electronic Health Record (EHR)

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Background

Government mandated use of the Electronic Healthcare Record (EHR) highlighted the need for the inclusion of nursing informatics content throughout nursing educational programs. Both the National League for Nursing and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing have published guidelines concerning the essential core competencies nursing students should acquire prior to graduation.

- Nursing informatics competencies should focus on clinical skills, improved documentation, quality, safety and best patient outcomes.

Purpose

The study purpose is the analysis of educational approaches being used to teach nursing informatics to pre-licensure nursing students. An integral component of teaching clinical informatics to nursing students is the use of an EHR.

- Use of the EHR is a critical component of quality and safety initiatives.
- EHR training can provide pre-licensure nursing students comprehensive understanding of the value technology brings to quality of care.
- Use of EHR training during educational programs should help alleviate training for graduate nurses.

Method

Whittemore and Knafl's (2005) integrative literature review research methodology was used in this appraisal of both qualitative and quantitative research.

- Problem identification
- Literature Search
- Data Evaluation
- Data Analysis
- Presentation

Research Question

The review process targeted the following research question:

- What are the educational strategies being used to teach nursing informatics competencies to undergraduate nursing students?
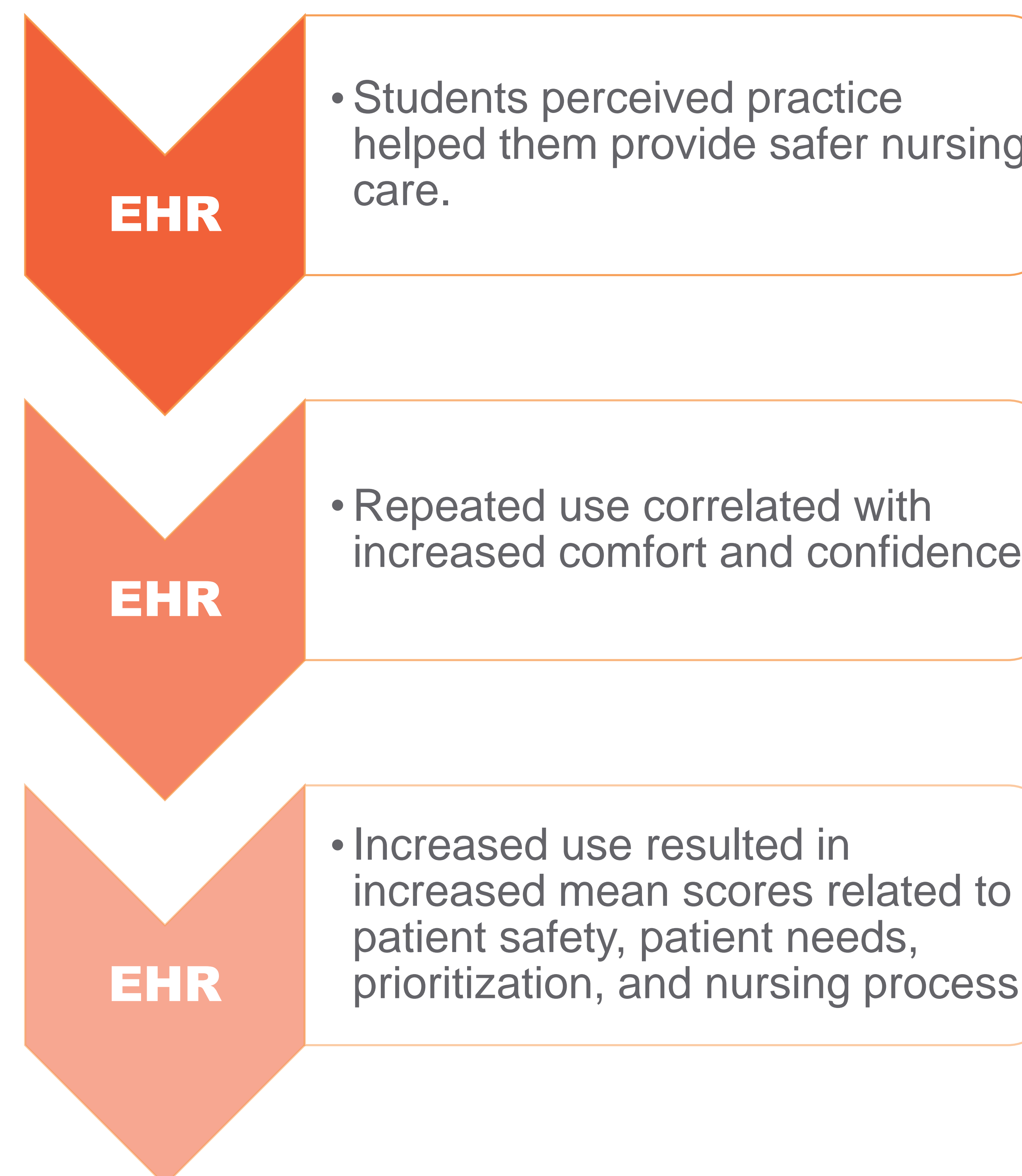
Results

Use of the EHR was the most frequently reported educational strategy used to teach nursing informatics.

- Both faculty and students reposted EHR use guided safer nursing care.
- Open Source and researcher created software used in educational settings.

EHR • Students perceived practice helped them provide safer nursing care.

EHR • Repeated use correlated with increased comfort and confidence.

EHR • Increased use resulted in increased mean scores related to patient safety, patient needs, prioritization, and nursing process.

Conclusions

Findings indicate:

- A gap in the literature relevant to best practices in teaching nursing informatics.
- Nursing graduates must be able to correctly use an electronic health record.
- EHR training helps new graduates create an accurate clinical picture of patient care by the ability to document real-time nursing interventions.
- Nursing informatics training is necessary to adequately prepare the professional nurse who can provide excellent nursing care in today's technology-laden healthcare environment.

Future Research

Sample population diversity is needed in future research.

- The overwhelming majority of the participants in the discovered research were baccalaureate nursing students.
- More information is needed about the way in which nursing informatics training is being addressed in graduate, associate and vocational level nursing program curricula.

References

Complete list of references available upon request. Please email: tracia.forman@utrgv.edu