Library Award for Research in STEM/Health Sciences
2017 Winning Essay by Katelyn Mesalam

1. Describe the purpose of your project/paper. If appropriate, describe the process used to formulate your research question or PICOT question.

As a part of the course NUR 415, students are placed into groups and given a scenario that they will focus on for a semester-long research project focused on creating a new nursing policy. My group was assigned a scenario in which patients in a diabetes clinic asked if they should be taking cinnamon to keep their glucose levels more stable. We began a systematic search of the literature based on the following PICOT question: In diabetic patients (P), how does the consumption of cinnamon (I) compared to no cinnamon (C) affect blood glucose (O) levels within three months (T)?

2. What skills did you develop and employ during your search for information or for your literature search?

When completing this systematic search, I became more comfortable in my navigation of databases and my knowledge of which variables to manipulate in my search to yield the type of information I am searching for. I was also able solidify my skills of identifying keywords specific to each database, using Boolean phrases, and recognizing instances where wildcards or truncation may be helpful. Overall, this search allowed me to employ the skills I had learned throughout my time in the College of Nursing in a way that will prepare me to make evidence-based change suggestions in my career as an RN.

3. Discuss your methods for selecting sources. Explain how you evaluated the authority, currency, or credibility of sources. If appropriate, explain how you evaluated the level of evidence.

We began our process of selection by uploading potential sources onto file exchange. Next, each member to became an "expert" on 2-3 sources. We then went through each source to evaluate if it met our criteria. Sources were limited to publication within the last 5 years, to establish currency. Credibility was determined by careful reading of the sources to note the research method, instrumentation, and transferability to the clinic setting. The level of evidence was also taken into consideration based upon guidelines from Melnyk and Fineout-Overholt's evidence hierarchy. In response, we focused on selecting systematic reviews and RCT's.

4. Discuss your methods for making connections between sources and/or synthesizing the findings of published studies, research findings, etc.

Part of our assignment included assembling a summary grid of our final eight sources. The summary grid included information such as purpose, sample size, design, how the intervention was measured, and results. Having these details organized in this way proved to be helpful in making connections and assessing if we had adequate evidence to make a

policy change. Best of all, the summary grid allowed us to see that the overall result from evidence showed that while cinnamon alone cannot control diabetes mellitus, it is a great addition to treatment for those who continue to have uncontrolled blood glucose.

5. What aspects of the information research process did you find most challenging? How did you overcome the challenges?

The most challenging aspect of the information research process was finding high levels of evidence that did not overlap by including the same studies. We overcame this challenge by continuing our systematic search based on the "Individual Literature Search Worksheet", provided to us by Professor Whalen. We also used references from articles to locate new studies that we had not already included. Although it was difficult to organize the studies within the systematic reviews, we found that a detailed search using the skills we were equipped with, along with a little patience, led us to necessary sources.