



***Promoting urinary
incontinence in women
after delivery: a randomized
controlled trial***

**by Pauline Chiarelli and
Jill Cockburn**



Nurses are among the most key persons in the healthcare related professions. They are tasked with very crucial functions of providing the best available care to their clients and patients through evidence-based practice. For them to succeed in their health care and service delivery, it is obligatory that they rely on the evidence from past practices and studies as much as possible. Here nurses assess the quality of existing investigations to determine if they are relevant to their practice (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2014). According to these authors, evidence-based practice incorporates professional expertise, patient need and preference, and the best available evidence. The aim of this paper is to critique a quantitative nursing research article entitled *Promoting urinary incontinence in women after delivery: a randomized controlled trial*. It is the article authored by Pauline Chiarelli and Jill Cockburn and published in the *British Medical Journal* in 2002.

The Rationale for this Article Critique

Many nursing-related articles are worth critiquing so as to determine if their pieces of evidence are worth adapting to the nursing practice. One of such articles is *Promoting urinary incontinence in women after delivery: randomized controlled trial* (Chiarelli, & Cockburn, 2002), which is exceptional to receive remarkable attention. Justification for this research article is that urinary incontinence is becoming an increasingly common problem among patients, especially women after delivery (Chiarelli & Cockburn, 2002). The condition is associated with much disgrace, and thus patients feel shy to discuss their illnesses with their physicians and nurses. Eventually, many of such conditions go unreported and untreated (Tunc, 2008). The condition has in recent years become so prevalent than before. The number of people it bothers is more than those affected by diabetes, heart attacks, and Alzheimer's disease (Becker, Stenzl, Wallwiener, & Zittel, 2005). Additionally, the condition is associated with hefty control costs, which exceed amounts incurred in renal dialysis and coronary artery surgeries combined (Gorina, Schappert, Bercovitz,

Elgaddal, & Kramarow, 2014). As such, immediate and deliberated interventions are required to create awareness among high-risk groups. The research article in question and others of its class are imperative as they enrich the nursing practice and raise standards of the profession. Nevertheless, not all findings in such studies are well conducted, and thus not all can be applied to the nursing practice. Therefore, the value of the study and the evidence provided by adopting it are worth considering and thus they are the basis for critically appraising the research.

The Critique

The title of the article clearly defines what the study entails. The study population, the outcome of the review, and the methodology are briefly included in the title. The article takes women suffering from urinary incontinence as the study population. It is a randomized control trial as the methodology of the study. The aim of the research article is to test the usefulness of a program intended to prevent urinary incontinence among women who have recently delivered. The objective can be described as motivating, relevant, and feasible. In spite of this, the paper has left out part on ethical considerations regarding the research. The rationalization for this is that all research studies involving human subjects require approval from ethics committees. The authors of this article have not hinted whether they sought any approval from an ethics committee. The paper can be described as inadequate based on this aspect.

Conventionally, a typical research paper has various subsections, which comprise the abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, findings and results, discussion, and conclusion. The article in question can be critically appraised based on these elements, which help to determine if the article can be improved, or it is acceptable. Firstly is the abstract part. The researched article *Promoting Urinary Continence in Women after Delivery: randomized controlled trial* (Chiarelli, & Cockburn, 2002) starts with an abstract, which provides insight into what the

research entails. It presents the objectives, design, setting, participants, outcome measures, results, and conclusions. In all research articles, the abstract is one of the most important parts, especially for busy readers who have limited time to read from page to page. A quick look through the abstract provides a general idea and enables the audience to assess the acceptability of the research.

Secondly is the introduction part, which is a requirement for any research paper. The introduction defines the research question to be answered. Chiarelli and Cockburn, the authors, have provided a very short introduction that disregards essential parts including the background, rationale, and the conceptual framework among others. The introduction ought to be detailed with all the parts recommended by the standard format. In spite of this mistake, the introduction has provided the question that is to be answered and has also provided the motive for the research.

Thirdly is the literature review, which provides a thorough summary of all the appropriate information regarding the subject of study. The section provides all facts justifying the topic and its importance. The authors of this article can be criticized for failing to provide a literature review for their research study. Rather, they have presented information intended for the literature review section in the introduction part, thus breaching the standard layout. The research can be improved if the authors incorporate studies by other scholars on the same subject.

Fourthly is the methodology section, which presents information on the methods used, design, participants, setting, and data collection and analysis. Chiarelli and Cockburn, the authors, have ignored the methodology section by failing to justify the study design adopted. Randomized control trial has not been defended as the choice of the research methodology. It seems that the authors have assumed that all the readers are practicing nurses or physicians capable of understanding the study designs and methodology used.

Fifthly is the findings and results in sections, which present results and outcomes of statistical tests and analyses. The section starts with the explanation of subjects from screening to enrollment into the study to the final analysis. The section also shows the characteristics of the population and the summary characteristics of comparative groups. The research article in question has presented a thorough results section describing features of the population. The study population consists of 720 women. All the participants in the control and intervention groups have the same age range, the same number of pregnancies, same marital status, and equal levels of education (Chiarelli & Cockburn, 2002). The authors have explained the screening and selection procedures used to come up with the study population. The article presents the final analysis in the form of text and tables, which are highly commendable as they enhance the understanding of readers.

The next section is a discussion, which interprets the findings of the study in light of the general schema of the current practice. Under this section, the article is limited as it fails to show the strengths and weaknesses of the study design used as required. Also, the section presents more weaknesses than strengths, which seemingly reduces the viability of the research. More importantly, the article does not bring in any comparisons of similar findings, and thus the relationship of the research to the current practice cannot be easily established.

The final part is a conclusion, which provides a summary of all key findings as well as recommendations. Chiarelli and Cockburn present a conclusion in the abstract and a brief part at the end of the article. The conclusion part is commendable as it provides the final answer to the research question.

Conclusion

This article critique has focused on the nursing research article entitled *Promoting*

urinary incontinence in women after delivery: randomized controlled trial by Pauline Chiarelli and Jill Cockburn (2002). The review has noted that the article has various strengths and weaknesses. After a critical appraisal, the paper suggests that the authors should present a detailed introduction, literature review, and a conclusion. The paper can be improved by adding various subsections required from a formal research paper. This way, the research will have an appealing appearance and would be of greater importance to the medical community.

