

# **Choosing Wisely®:** **RN and APRN Knowledge Assessment**

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# Introduction

A national campaign led by the American Board of Internal Medicine, Choosing Wisely® is focused on educating the general public about making informed health care decisions (choosingwisely.org, n.d.). A key focus of the campaign is to encourage open communication between health care providers and their patients and families with a goal of reducing unnecessary care. The knowledge level of professional registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses was assessed in one state regarding the Choosing Wisely® campaign.

## What is Choosing Wisely®?

The Choosing Wisely® campaign is an initiative of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) that works to improve communication between providers and patients. The campaign began in April 2012 with the goal of promoting communication that would help patients choose care that is supported by evidence, does not duplicate tests or procedures that have already been completed, does not cause harm and is truly needed to guide care. Currently, there are more than 70 specialty society partner health care provider organizations that have released a list of tests or procedures to consider.

## Nursing a Key Partner in the Campaign

The ABIM Foundation challenged medical organizations to develop a list focused on their specialty. There are 14 consumer groups that have collaborated with Consumer Reports that are supporting the Choosing Wisely® campaign, including AARP and the Leapfrog Group.

The American Academy of Nursing (AAN) was invited to participate in the Choosing Wisely® campaign to develop recommendations specific to the role of nursing. AAN is leading the nursing profession's recommendations and plays a critical role in the education of nurses nationwide regarding the recommendations. At the AAN conference held in October 2014, Texas was named as the pilot state for implementing nursing considerations for the Choosing Wisely® campaign. The first five nursing recommendations were released at the same time. Current nursing recommendations are listed below.

- Don't place or maintain a urinary catheter in a patient unless there is a specific indication to do so.
- Don't wake the patient for routine care unless the patient's condition or care specifically requires it.
- Don't use physical restraints with an older hospitalized patient.
- Don't let older adults lie in bed or only get up to a chair during their hospital stay.
- Don't automatically initiate continuous electronic fetal heart rate (FHR) monitoring during labor for women without risk factors; consider intermittent auscultation (IA) first.
- Don't neglect to advise patients with cancer to get physical activity and exercise during and after treatment to manage fatigue and other symptoms.

- Don't use aloe vera on skin to prevent or treat radiodermatitis.
- Don't use mixed medication mouthwash, commonly termed "magic mouthwash," to prevent or manage cancer treatment-induced oral mucositis.
- Don't use L-carnitine/acetyl-L-carnitine supplements to prevent or treat symptoms of peripheral neuropathy in patients receiving chemotherapy for treatment of cancer.
- Don't administer supplemental oxygen to relieve dyspnea in patients with cancer who do not have hypoxia.

For the most current recommendations, visit [choosingwisely.org](http://choosingwisely.org).

## **Nurses Knowledge of Choosing Wisely®**

When searching for available literature, the terms patient centered care, patient centered concepts, patient centered communication, and Choosing Wisely® campaign were used to search Pubmed, Medline and CINAHL databases. Over 3000 articles were returned by using these terms. The literature revealed one qualitative study conducted by PerryUndem (2014). This study was conducted by phone with practicing physicians across the United States. The study consisted of questions related to knowledge of the Choosing Wisely® campaign and the impact of the Choosing Wisely® campaign recommendations on their individual practice. There were no quantitative studies available at this time. There are guidelines provided by the participating organizations that indicate five tests or procedures that should be discussed and considered prior to use.

## **Texas as the Pilot State**

Texas initiated a multi-year pilot study focused on assessing nurses' knowledge of the Choosing Wisely® campaign and then educating nurses based on survey findings. Multiple stakeholders, both nationally and across the state of Texas, are involved in the successful implementation of this pilot project. Texas participants in the project include the Texas Nurses Association, the Texas Organization of Nurse Executives and the Texas Team Advancing Health through Nursing, a state action coalition focused on achieving the Institute of Medicine Future of Nursing goals (Texas Team).

Once the pilot was complete, Texas Team members and Academy members collaborated with AAN to provide education for nurses across the country. The education may be viewed at [https://aan.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/Choosing\\_Wisely/choosing%20wisely%20ppt%20education%20august%2016b.pdf](https://aan.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/Choosing_Wisely/choosing%20wisely%20ppt%20education%20august%2016b.pdf).

## Survey Design, Methods, and Limitations

The primary purpose of this survey was to assess the knowledge of RNs and APRNs regarding the Choosing Wisely® campaign. The survey received approval to proceed from the Texas Tech University Health Science Center Institutional Review Board. The survey was built in Qualtrics, a system is used by the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies to conduct electronic surveys.

The survey was conducted electronically during the months of September and October 2015. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time. The survey took less than 10 minutes to complete. There were no risks associated with participating in the study. The survey collected no identifying information of any respondent. All survey responses were recorded anonymously.

Due to the differences in scopes of practice, two separate surveys were administered - one for RNs and one for APRNs. Each survey assessed current knowledge and perception of the Choosing Wisely® campaign. The survey for APRNs was similar to a study conducted by PerryUndem (2014) that focused on assessment of physician knowledge regarding the Choosing Wisely® campaign.

Limitations of the survey include lack of direct access to RNs and APRNs across the state of Texas resulting in a small sample size. Additionally, there is no direct comparison for the survey.

## Data Analysis

Over a period of approximately six weeks, 374 nurses participated in the survey. Of the participants, 295 were RNs and 79 were APRNs.

Demographics	RN	APRN
Sex	91.3% female	90.9% female
Practice Setting	3.9% clinic <b>60% hospital setting</b> 36% other clinical setting	<b>42.4% clinic</b> 33.3% hospital setting 24.2% other clinical setting
Years in Practice in Role	22.5% < 5 years 13.8% 6 – 10 years 21.3% 11 – 20 years 19% 21 – 30 years <b>23.3% &gt; 30 years</b>	<b>39.4% &lt; 5 years</b> 12.2% 6 – 10 years 27.3% 11 – 20 years 13.6% 21 – 30 years 7.6% > 30 years
Level of Education	19.2% Associate 29.4% Bachelor <b>36.5% Master</b> 14.9% Doctorate	<b>80.3% Master</b> 19.7% Doctorate

## RN Survey Results

Approximately 45% of RNs that participated in the survey responded that unnecessary nursing care was a somewhat serious problem (Figure 1) and over half felt a great deal of responsibility to ensure their patients avoided unnecessary care (Figure 2). When asked who was in the best position to address the problem of unnecessary nursing care, the overwhelming response was the RN (70%) (Figure 3). The top three reasons that RNs identified as leading to the overuse of unnecessary care and tests and procedures include not having enough time with a patient for meaningful discussion, concern about malpractice issues, and just to be safe.

Cost of tests and procedures are often not addressed by the RN – over half responded that cost is never or rarely discussed (Figure 4). The majority of RNs (55%) believe the MD or APRN is in the best position to address unnecessary tests and procedures (Figure 5). According to those surveyed, 78% indicated the most effective way to address unnecessary nursing care is by using evidence based practice (Figure 6) but when asked to assess their knowledge of EBP, 52% indicated some knowledge with 20% indicating not much knowledge (Figure 7). It is encouraging that 95% are interested in learning more (Figure 8). Only 21% of RNs have heard of the Choosing Wisely® campaign (Figure 9).

Figure 1. How serious is the problem of unnecessary nursing care in the health system?

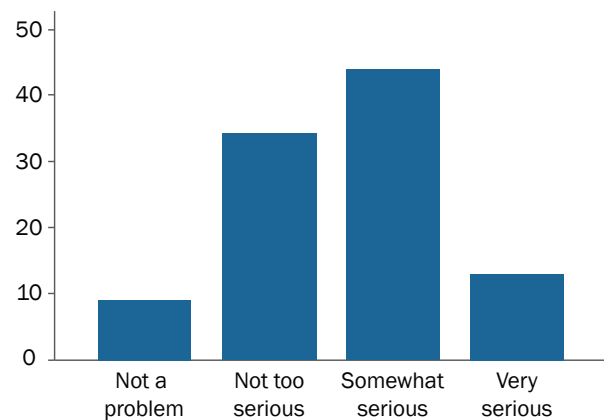


Figure 2. How much responsibility do you feel you have for making sure your patients avoid unnecessary nursing care?

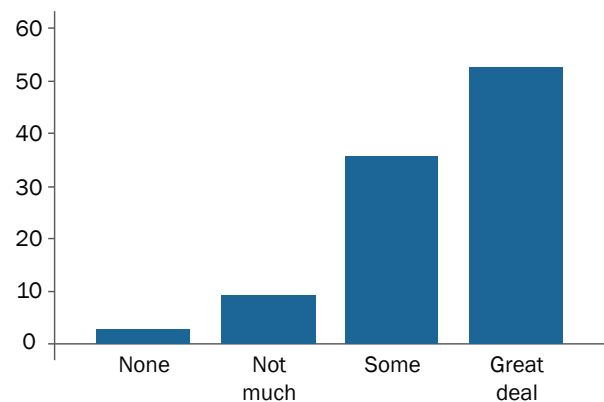


Figure 3. Who is in the best position to address the problem of unnecessary nursing care?

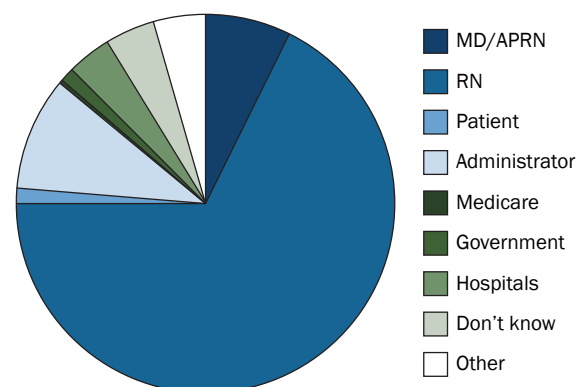


Figure 4. How often do you talk with patients about the costs of healthcare tests and procedures?

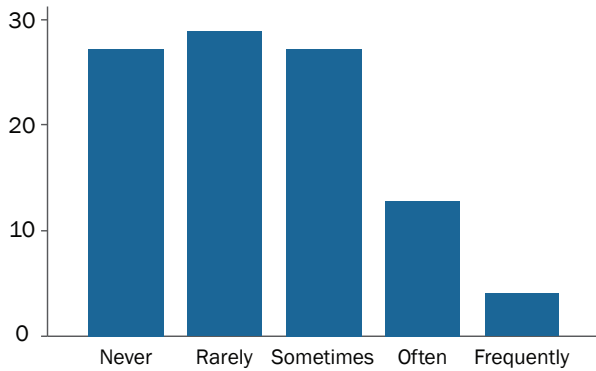


Figure 7. Rate your knowledge about evidence-based practice.

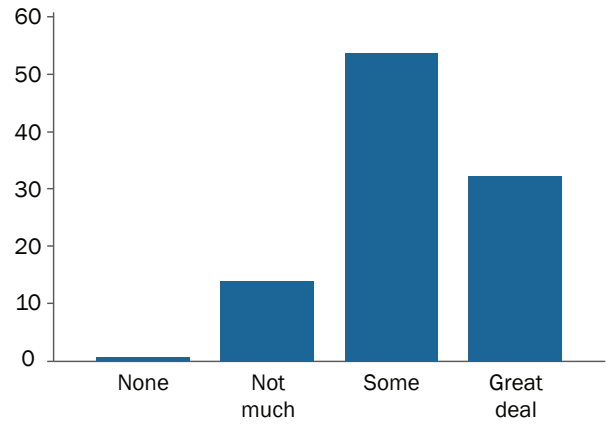


Figure 5. Who is in the best position to address the problem of unnecessary tests and procedures?

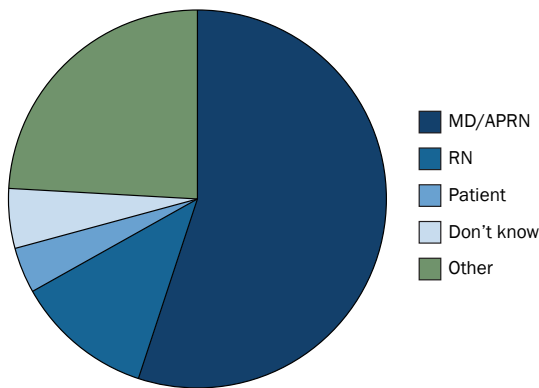


Figure 8. What is your level of interest in learning more about evidence-based recommendations?

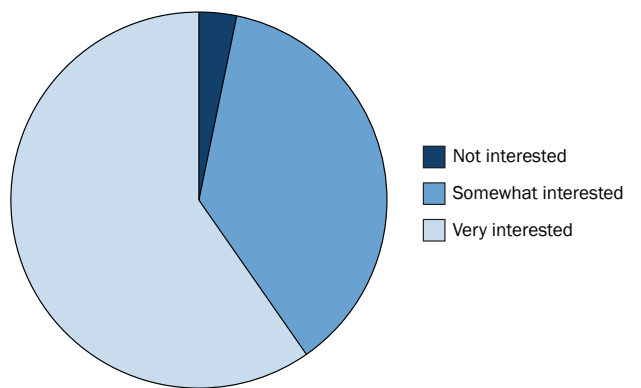


Figure 6. What is the most effective strategy to reduce unnecessary nursing care?

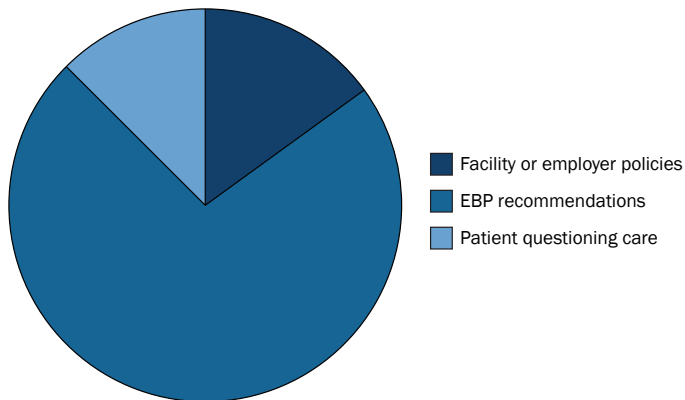
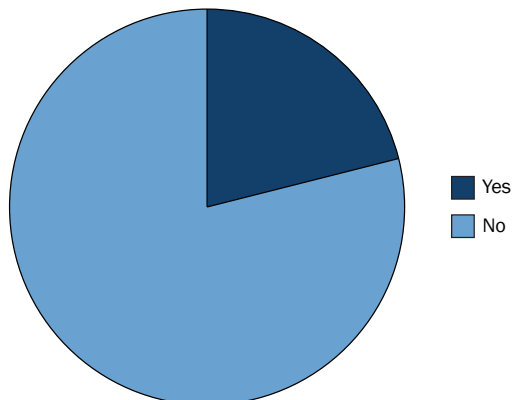


Figure 9. Have you heard of the Choosing Wisely® campaign?



## APRN Survey Results

Over half of APRNs that participated in the survey responded that unnecessary nursing care was a somewhat serious problem (Figure 10) and that the person in the best position to address the issue is the MD or APRN (Figure 11). The top three reasons that APRNs identified as leading to the overuse of unnecessary care and tests and procedures include concern about malpractice issues, patients insisting on getting the test or procedure, and not having enough time with a patient for meaningful discussion.

Cost of tests and procedures are often addressed by the APRN – 48% responded that cost is often or frequently discussed (Figure 12). Only 26% of APRNs have heard of the Choosing Wisely® campaign (Figure 13).

Of the APRNs who have heard of the Choosing Wisely® campaign, 90% believe the recommendations were helpful, 67% have discussed the recommendations with their patients and all felt the information was valuable when talking to patients. Over the next 12 months, approximately half of the APRNs plan to talk to their patients often or frequently about avoiding unnecessary tests and procedures.

Figure 10. How serious is the problem of unnecessary nursing care in the health system?

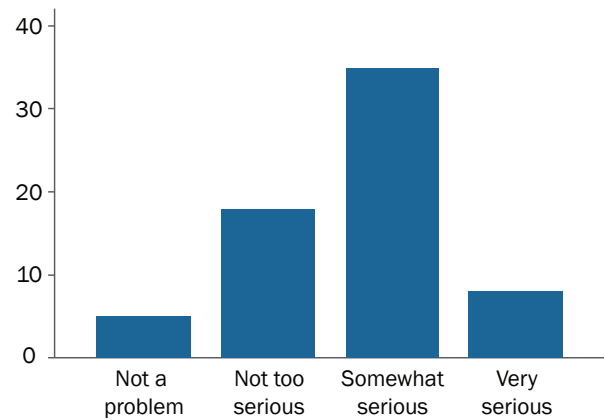


Figure 11. Who is in the best position to address the problem of unnecessary tests and procedures?

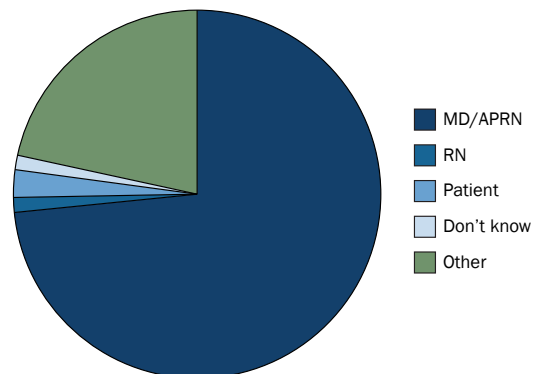


Figure 12. How often do you talk with patients about the costs of healthcare tests and procedures?

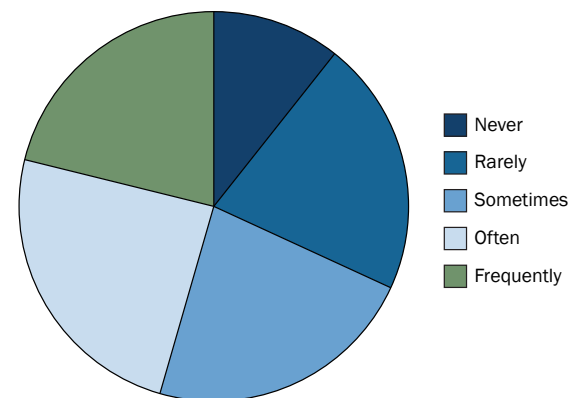
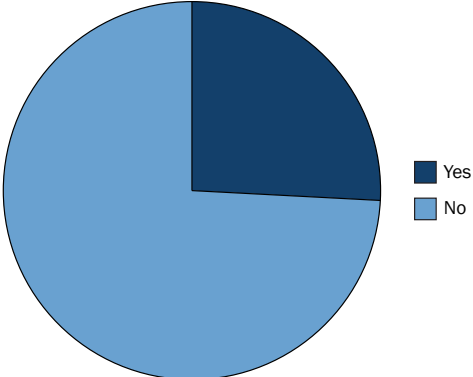


Figure 13. Have you heard of the Choosing Wisely®





## Discussion

There is a significant lack of knowledge regarding the Choosing Wisely® campaign among RNs and APRNs in Texas. Most RNs are unaware of the campaign and therefore, are not aware of the affect that nurses can have on unnecessary care. Approximately 60% of RNs work in the hospital setting; the first five nursing recommendations were focused on patients receiving care in a hospital. The potential is present for a significant reduction in unnecessary nursing care that could be spearheaded by this group. APRNs have a similar opportunity; many APRNs serve as the primary care provider for a group of patients. With over 70 professional organizations that have developed guidelines, the APRN has a vast resource of guidelines to help reduce unnecessary care.

Perceptions were similar between the two groups with both believing that patients are receiving unnecessary care and that the RN or APRN is in the best position to eliminate this waste. Both groups also agreed that barriers to reducing unnecessary care include not enough time for discussions with the patient and concerns for malpractice.

## Next Steps

Additional surveys should be conducted to assess the knowledge level of a larger number of RNs and APRNs. These results reflect one state; it is important to expand beyond one state. The Choosing Wisely® campaign recommendations need to be integrated into nursing programs at all levels and encouraged in APRN programs. Research regarding implementation of the recommendations into the practice of APRNs would be provide data that could be used to determine the impact on reducing health care costs. Finally, education for nurse executives can have a positive impact on implementation of recommendations in acute care facilities, leading to reduction of unnecessary tests and procedures and increased understanding of evidence based practice.

## Conclusion

This study represents the first knowledge assessment of RNs and APRNs regarding the Choosing Wisely® campaign and findings show a lack of awareness in these groups. The results indicate an immediate need for education at all levels. To achieve the triple aim of reducing cost, improving health and improving healthcare, we need to focus on implementing the Choosing Wisely® campaign recommendations across all disciplines. Implementation will not be easy and will require collaboration among professionals and support for change. Additional research is necessary to determine the effectiveness of implementing the Choosing Wisely® recommendations.

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## Acknowledgements

Development and execution of this project would not have been possible without the tireless effort and support of this team. Each person played a different role but it took everyone working together to ensure success.

- Joyce Batcheller, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, Nurse Executive Advisor, Leadership at The Center for the Advancement of Healthcare Professionals; Adjunct Faculty, Texas Tech University Health Science Center School of Nursing, Lubbock
- Stacey Cropley, DNP, RN, Lead Nursing Consultant for Practice, Texas Board of Nursing
- Cole Edmonson, DNP, RN, FACHE, NEA-BC, Chief Nursing Officer at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital
- Alexia Green, PhD, RN, FAAN, Professor and Dean Emerita
- Lisa Hernandez, DNP, RN, CENP, Chief Nursing Officer at Sarah Lincoln Bush Hospital
- The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies
  - Pam Lauer, MPH, Program Director
  - Cate Campbell, MPH
- Cindy Zolnierek, PhD, RN, Executive Director at Texas Nurses Association