

The Next Era of Nursing

Evidence, Technology, and the Power of Professional Curiosity

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THIS MOMENT

"We are practicing nursing in a moment of profound transition."

Energized

Curious

Uncertain

Unsure

Both at Once

Somewhere in
between

MORE TECHNOLOGY CAN FEEL LIKE MORE NOISE

The IV pump was chirping, the patient was restless, and my nursing gut was telling me something was sliding sideways.

THE QUESTION

*"Professor, how do I know when it's right?
How do I know when I should trust it?"*

-- 1st-year BSN student, using generative AI

A PULSE CHECK

Three states of mind. One professional opportunity.

Excitement

Skepticism

Cautiously Curious

THE THROUGHLINE

Professional Curiosity

A disciplined habit of thinking and a professional commitment.

Ask Better Questions

Challenge what evidence underlies a recommendation, guideline, or AI output.

Seek Stronger Evidence

Verify sources, check methodology, and match findings to your patient population.

Stay Critically Curious

Interrogate whether information is accurate, relevant, and applicable.

WHAT IS GENERATIVE AI?

What It IS

- > Trained on vast bodies of existing text, data, and images
- > Generates new content by recognizing patterns in training data
- > Predicts what a plausible response looks like
- > Fast at organizing and summarizing information

What It Is NOT

- X Thinking or reasoning like a human
- X It predicts, not understands
- x Aware of clinical context
- X Truthful -- it predicts plausibility, not accuracy

WHEN AI PRIORITIZES LOOKING RIGHT OVER BEING RIGHT

A researcher asked AI for three peer-reviewed sources. The citations looked impeccable – authors, titles, journals, DOI numbers.

None of those papers existed.

CONFIDENT INACCURACY

AI can sound very certain -- even when it is wrong.

Drug Interaction Query

A nurse asks about warfarin + cranberry supplements.

Without prior knowledge to cross-check, you would never know it was wrong!

Discharge Teaching Materials

AI drafts heart failure discharge instructions.

Everything is presented with equal confidence, making errors harder to catch!

WHAT AI CAN SUPPORT

Think of AI as a very fast -- but naive -- research assistant.

1

Literature
Summarizing

2

Data
Organizing

3

Writing
Clarity

4

Reflective
Scaffolding

Important: You remain the expert. The assistant is confident even when wrong.

Pressure Injury Prevention Literature Review

The Task

A team of nurse researchers needs to review dozens of studies.

AI Contribution

The team uploads abstracts to an AI tool.

AI reduced the time needed for early review stages

The Catch

AI IS ALREADY HERE

Clinical & Documentation

- > Ambient documentation
- > EHR features
- > Chatbots

Analytics & Operations

- > Predictive analytics
- > Staffing and scheduling
- > Each tool has different strengths, failure modes, and accountability implications

EVALUATING AI TOOLS

Four Questions for Any AI Tool

Who Built This?

What data was it trained on?

What Are Its Limits?

What does it do well, and what are its known failure modes?

Who Is Accountable?

When it gets something wrong, who is responsible?

Where Was It Tested?

Has It Been Validated?

THE ESSENTIAL COMPETENCY

Professional Curiosity

In practice, professional curiosity looks like this:

Verify Information

Check every AI-generated output.

Ask Who Built This

When your organization adopts an AI tool, ask.

Speak Up When It Feels Wrong

Silence is not safety.

THE TRAP

Automation Bias

What It Is

The tendency to favor suggestions from automated systems

Why AI Makes It Worse

Generative AI is designed to sound confident and plausible

The Safeguard

Professional curiosity

Reflective Moment

When has your professional curiosity, that habit of asking 'Why?,' prevented you from following a path that might have led to an error?

ORGANIZATIONAL RISK

When Organizations Skip the Hard Questions

The Scenario

A health system adopts an AI-powered clinical decision support tool without verifying the training population matches theirs.

Six Months Later

The tool flags interventions differently for certain patient populations.

OPPORTUNITIES AND PITFALLS

What Nurses Report

Optimism

Nurses are the most optimistic professional group.

Burnout Relief

45% believe generative AI can reduce nursing burnout.

Concerns

Over half worry about erosion of clinical decision-making skills.

WHERE AI DOES NOT BELONG

Clear professional and ethical boundaries must guide AI use.

x **Clinical Decision-Making**

x **Defining Meaningful Improvement**

X **Interpreting Research Findings**

X **Unsupervised Use with Patient Data**

Using AI Responsibly in Nursing

Bias in Training Data

AI reflects historical disparities in healthcare data.

Privacy & Institutional Oversight

Before using AI with clinical information, confirm your institution has approved the tool.

Transparency & Accountability

If AI supported a decision, people deserve to know.

Listen for What Drives the Work

Listen for Curiosity

Notice the question someone thought mattered

Listen for the curiosity-driven inquiry behind the data

Nursing Judgment

Evidence informs the work.

Nurses interpret the evidence.

We make the decisions.

We are accountable.

THE QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING

The answers do not begin with the technology.
They begin with us.

X What can AI do?

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> What should we do with AI, in service of what nursing stands for?

X How do we integrate this tool?

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> How do we integrate it in ways that strengthen judgment and care?

X How do we keep up with innovation?

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> How do we lead innovation with intention, ethics, and evidence?

REFLECTION: ONE REAL QUESTION

Professional curiosity becomes professional action

Think about the one question this conference is sending you home with.

- *A tool I've been curious about but haven't tried?*
- *A workflow that might benefit from AI support?*
- *Has a new tool in my organization been validated?*

One real question. Specific to your practice. Something you are actually going to follow through on.

CALL TO ACTION

The Future of AI in Nursing Begins with Nurses.

Listen for curiosity.
Ask hard questions.

Verify what you are told.
Stay in the interpreter role.

Use evidence to lead.
Name ethical concerns.

Trust your professional
judgment -- patients need it.

References and Recommended Reading

