I think we’re very good at reinventing the wheel in older people’s nursing. We’re often struggling with the same practice issues regardless of care setting across the country, indeed internationally. And often the starting point is to develop a local solution. Solutions that work take account of the local context but should also be based on what’s worked elsewhere. And determining what has worked elsewhere has to be done by reference to a high standard for the quality of the evidence. But the trouble is that the quality of the evidence to guide older people’s nursing care is patchy at best.

There is no doubt we need more research to guide nurses and their leaders in developing practice. Regardless, finding the solution to a practice issue should begin with a hunt for the evidence, however slim. All nurses also need to be research-savvy enough to work out which research findings can be trusted and which can’t. And finally, making the most of trustworthy resources already available and that properly evaluate and summarise existing research can be a helpful and efficient way of getting an overview.

In 2009 I led the development of a set of best practice guidelines for nurses caring for older people in acute settings(Bridges et al., 2009). They promoted a relationship-centred approach to nursing, focusing on older people’s needs to feel connected (‘connect with me’), understood (‘see who I am’) and involved in their care (‘involve me’)(Bridges et al., 2010). They summarise the evidence on supporting people with mental health needs, with palliative care needs, and at the end of their life. They also provide guidance on pressure ulcer prevention, promoting nutrition and hydration, continence and falls prevention. No doubt some of the underpinning evidence has moved on and so we’re seeking funding to review and update the guidance. But some, particularly the guidance on relational aspects of care, is now better supported with research than when the guidance was first published.

The guidance comes in the form of a [CD](http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/~jemeyer/bpop/online/online/index.htm) and a [booklet](http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/~jemeyer/bpop/guide.pdf). The best practice statements are set out in full on the CD, along with links to videos of patient stories and to other resources. The booklet includes ideas for individual nurses and nursing teams to work with the best practice statements to identify existing good practice and to articulate the support they need to maintain and build on this.

Even though an update is due, nurses could still find this guidance a helpful starting point in their hunt for evidence and in setting standards for practice in their own setting.

BRIDGES, J., FLATLEY, M. & MEYER, J. 2009. Guidance on best practice in acute care. *Nursing Older People,* 21**,** 18-21.

BRIDGES, J., FLATLEY, M. & MEYER, J. 2010. Older people's and relatives' experiences in acute care settings: systematic review and synthesis of qualitative studies. *International Journal of Nursing Studies,* 47**,** 89-107.