I was keen to review this book as I am in the process of undertaking a clinical doctorate, and research is very much at the forefront of my mind. This book offers information exactly as the title suggests in that it addresses the research process in nursing. Being the 6th edition, the book begins by acknowledging what is different from previous editions. The editors comment that the 6th edition incorporates ten new chapters including narrative research, mixed methods and how to apply research into clinical practice.

The developments in nursing research are identified, ensuring that the reader has the most up-to-date information. For any additional questions, the reader is sign-posted toward an extensive reference list at the end of each section. It is set out clearly in six sections; the first and second sections incorporate the fundamental principles of undertaking any research project. The third section helps the reader choose the right approach and discusses each approach in depth. Sections four and five focus on data collection and making sense of the data, while section six concludes the book by addressing how to implement research into practice. There are key points to guide the reader at the beginning of each chapter. Special considerations, such as ethnicity, that may need to be considered when conducting nursing research are also recognised. Without doubt this text is easy to navigate through.

The book is suitable for nurses and midwives as well as other health and social care workers who may be interested in the fundamental principles of research, including those who may be new to research and those who may be well established in undertaking research but may need additional reference points. Certain terms are used to try and reduce repetition, and ‘nursing’ is acknowledged as one of these terms. The authors recognize that in using this term throughout the book they are referring to all professions of nursing, midwifery, health visiting and other specialists. The book’s sections flow logically but each chapter is complete in itself, which makes it easy for the reader to find their particular area of interest. To support the reader in the ability to access chapters independently, cross-references to other chapters are included. The additional glossary of research vocabulary terms will be beneficial to any reader who may be unfamiliar with some of the research language.

The book also offers an accompanying website. Readers looking to embark on research, or perhaps review a particular research method, would find this book an asset. This book would be a useful text to have for any nurse or health professional interested in undertaking research.

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Dear Editor

At the recent 4th National Palliative Care conference held in Glasgow at the beginning of June, Robert Becker remarked on the theoretical, philosophical and existential dimensions of palliative care. In some branches of nursing, pondering these issues may not be considered best use of a clinician’s time. However, palliative care is different because care of the dying highlights, even focuses on, the big questions of life and death.

Obviously, palliative care nurses are as human as everyone else and may not relish this aspect of the role. Communicating honestly and openly with a dying person can involve seeing the depths of their anguish, and in a clinical encounter it might seem wise to move the topic on to something less metaphysical. But in doing this, are we unconsciously prioritizing our own wish to avoid feeling distressed and useless, over the patient’s need to grapple with painful concepts?

Although widespread uptake of clinical supervision has probably improved emotional self awareness and communication skills in palliative care nurses, research studies have shown that communication with patients still needs to improve. Showing empathy and humanity are valid nursing interventions (Peplau, 1992); we should not underestimate the therapeutic value of supporting someone who is trying to face, and feel, their feelings.

So another big question is: how can nurses in palliative care help others to express their feelings?