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**Module 2 DQ**

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## **The Connection Between Theory and Research**

Theory and research are interconnected, as they mutually inform and enhance each other's understanding. Theories provide the groundwork for conducting research, while research contributes to the development and testing of theories. Research aims to gather evidence that either supports or challenges hypotheses explaining the relationships between variables and their interactions. In nursing literature, theories are often utilized to guide research and form the foundation for evidence-based practice.

### **Example**

One example of how theory supports nursing research is the Health Belief Model (HBM). The HBM is a theoretical framework that explains individuals' engagement in health-related behaviors (Kroke & Ruthig, 2021). It suggests that people's likelihood of engaging in health-promoting behaviors is influenced by their perception of the severity of a health issue, their susceptibility to it, the benefits of taking preventive or curative actions, and the barriers to doing so.

For instance, Yang et al. (2023) employed the HBM in a study investigating the factors influencing healthcare-seeking behaviors among older adults in Hong Kong. The study findings confirmed the validity of the HBM as a theoretical framework for understanding health behaviors in this population. They demonstrated that the HBM served as a useful theoretical foundation for comprehending the factors affecting healthcare-seeking behaviors among older adults. This study exemplifies how theory can guide research and generate new knowledge.

Conversely, research can also support the validation of theories. Leclerc et al. (2020) examined the relationship between nurse practice settings and patient outcomes by studying hospitals designated as Magnet hospitals. According to the Magnet hospital concept, hospitals characterized by nurse leadership, nurse empowerment, and a positive work environment may yield better patient outcomes. The study's findings provided evidence supporting the Magnet hospital hypothesis and established a robust positive correlation between the characteristics of Magnet hospitals and patient outcomes.

In nursing research, theories provide the foundation for conducting studies, while empirical data derived from research helps bolster the credibility and validity of theoretical frameworks. The utilization of theory as a basis for generating new knowledge and gaining insights into health behaviors can be highly beneficial. Similarly, research findings contribute to validating and refining existing theories, enhancing their practical applicability.

## References

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