Nurse-driven Assessment of Maternal-Infant Attachment in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Dolores Greenwood, DNP, RNC-NIC---Margaret Brady, PhD, RN, CPNP-PC---Penny Weismuller, DrPH, RN

Background
- Prolonged hospitalization can create stress that will affect the development of healthy mother-infant relationships.
- The NICU setting can negatively impact the infant’s future physical and mental health.

Problem Statement
- Currently, the assessment of maternal-infant attachment by nursing staff is not routinely documented.
- Goal was to increase referrals to psychologist in NICU.

Purpose
- Develop and implement an assessment tool for NICU maternal-infant dyads in order to assess mother-infant attachment.
- Need for nurses to recognize cues of problematic issues

Methods
- Design
  - Quality improvement project designed to develop a nurse driven assessment protocol.
  - Create guide for nurses to identify positive and negative indicators of maternal-infant bond.
- Setting
  - 391 bed, Magnet designated children’s hospital located in Los Angeles.
  - Level IV NICU unit comprised of 58 critical care beds.
  - Patients are of 1:1 and 1:2 acuity.
- Sample
  - 150 RNs who work in the NICU as bedside nurses.
  - Project was piloted in one zone of the unit with 11 beds.
- Tool Development
  - An expert panel compiled a list of characteristics.
  - Final list was determined, using inter-rater agreement of 90%
- Education of Nurses consisted of:
  - Project purpose and objectives
  - Overview of maternal-infant bonding
  - How to use Nurse Driven Assessment Tool (NDAT)
  - Based on results of assessment tool, request early referral for psychological intervention

Results
- Literature Review
  - Maternal-Infant Attachment
    - Closeness-The ability for the mother to stay close to her infant by:
      - Breastfeeding
      - Kangaroo care
      - Holding or touching the infant
      - Being actively involved with the decision making and plan of care for her infant
  - The Neonatal Nurses’ Role in the Assessment Maternal-Infant Attachment
    - Neonatal nurses’ interaction with mother.
    - Discharge teaching when appropriate.
    - Engagement in care.
    - Breastfeeding/kangaroo care if applicable.
    - Ability of nurse to promote attachment.
    - Encourage interaction with infant as soon as possible.

- Theoretical Framework
  - PDSA model (Deming, 1994, p 132)

- Discussions
  - Long-term goal
    - Assessment of attachment or infant reactions to maternal interaction will be added to the EMR
    - Development of maternal-infant attachment care plan

- Future Considerations
  - Education plan will be modified to a more formal process to educate the nurses
    - Psychologists agree to assist with providing education
    - NDAT tool to be modified to include fewer characteristics for the infant
    - Seven characteristics listed for infant
    - Four characteristics listed for mother
    - Long-term goal
      - Assessment of attachment or infant reactions to maternal interaction will be added to the EMR

- Education of the NICU staff nurses accomplished goals
  - Increased awareness of psychology team
  - NICU nurses play important role in promoting closeness of parents
  - Increase ability of parents or mother to readily bond with their infant

- Discussion
  - Difficult to generalize results based on low response rate
  - Unable to resend survey

- Results
  - The nurses responded to the following prompt: Please provide any other comments or concerns regarding the education or use of the tool that may assist in this project.
  - Nurses responses were:
    - “I think the tool is easy to understand and practical to use.”
    - “I think this is a good tool.
    - “Thank you for this education mother/infant bonding is something we don’t even highlight because it’s so engrained in us as nurses, but in fact this education helps to highlight the fact that the mother/infant bond is important and needs to be assessed more closely.”
    - “I think it’s really great that we’re looking at the maternal-infant bond. It would be great to have more education about how the bond affects babies and moms later in life. It would also be great if maybe we had a care plan that we could start altered maternal bond- we only have a parental one. Because then we could DARP on it and document more.”

- Study
  - Attribute
    - Are you a male or female?
    - Gender
    - Race
    - Age
    - Education:
      - High School
      - College
      - Bachelor’s Degree
      - Master’s Degree
      - Doctorate
    - Current Employment Status:
      - Full Time
      - Part Time
      - Freelance
    - How many years have you been in your current employment status?
    - How many years of education have you completed?
    - What is your highest level of education?
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