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Development of an evidence-based neonatal discharge pathway based on the principles of family-centered care

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Objective: Present the development of an evidence-based neonatal discharge pathway based on the core principles of family-centered care designed to increase parent participation in care and to improve parent readiness and confidence in assuming full care of their high-risk neonate.

Background & Significance: Despite the abundance of evidence supporting family-centered care and a comprehensive discharge teaching process for the NICU, implementation of family-centered care practices continues to be a challenge and inconsistencies in discharge teaching processes persist. A neonatal discharge pathway with specific teaching transition points provides a more comprehensive discharge process, integrates the principles of family-centered care into all care practices, enhances the partnership between the nurse and the family, and ensures parents are involved early and throughout their infant's NICU journey.

Presentation includes:

1. The scientific development of an evidence-based discharge teaching pathway by use of the European Pathway Association's eight step method for pathway development. The discharge pathway includes transition points for teaching and teaching topics.
2. The integration of Peplau's Theory of Interpersonal Relations which emphasizes the partnership between the nurse and the family.
3. Families desire to participate and reasons for their hesitancy to participate in care. Appropriate interventions to address these issues are presented.
4. Presentation of a family-friendly bedside poster which enables the family and all staff to view and track infant and family progress and readiness toward discharge.
5. A plan for implementation of the discharge pathway (parent and staff education).
6. A highlight of nursing's vital contribution to the development of evidenced-based practice and to the improvement in patient and family outcomes.

Biography

Lorraine Shields has completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Vanderbilt School of Nursing, Nashville Tennessee. She has 36 years in Neonatal Nursing as a bedside nurse, transport nurse, Clinical Nurse Specialist, and Neonatal Nurse Practitioner. She has served many positions in the National Association of Neonatal Nurses. She is currently Assistant Professor of Nursing in the graduate program at College of Nursing at California Baptist University.

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