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Theory of infants' transition from the neonatal intensive care unit to home: A grounded theory study

Mahboobeh Namnabati

Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Iran

Introduction & Aim: Hospitalization in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) is a challenge for the infant, the family and the health system, because many infants require a long stay in the NICU due to their need for intensive care. The purpose of this study was to discover and describe the management of infants' transition from the neonatal intensive care unit to home.

Materials & Methods: A grounded theory method served to describe participants' experiences about infants' transition. Interviews were conducted with 31 professionals and 20 family members and participant observations were made in hospitals, clinics and one physician office. We used MAXQDA 10 for coding and categorizing data.

Results: The theory that emerged illustrated six phenomena: An unexpected separation; A crisis situation; Mother-infant rebonding; Protection of the infant's health; Promotion of growth and development; and Inadequate management causing disability. Together, these formed a three-phase process consisting of a threat to the infant's life, efforts to save the infant's life and continuation of life.

Conclusion: Guidelines based on the theory should include prevention of mother-infant separation, support of the parents in their role as primary caregivers and individual follow up with home visits by nurses.

Biography

Mahboobeh Namnabati has completed her PhD from Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Iran. She is an Academic Member in Nursing Faculty. She has published more than 32 papers about pain management, home care, infants and pediatric and published two books.

namnabat@nm.mui.ac.ir

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