

8-5-2022

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CIERRA ROBINSON. 2022. *Needs-Assessment Questionnaire Development Through the Interviews of Mothers Post Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Discharge: A Qualitative Study*. Capstone. Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from NSUWorks, . (78)
https://nsuworks.nova.edu/hpd_ot_capstone/78.

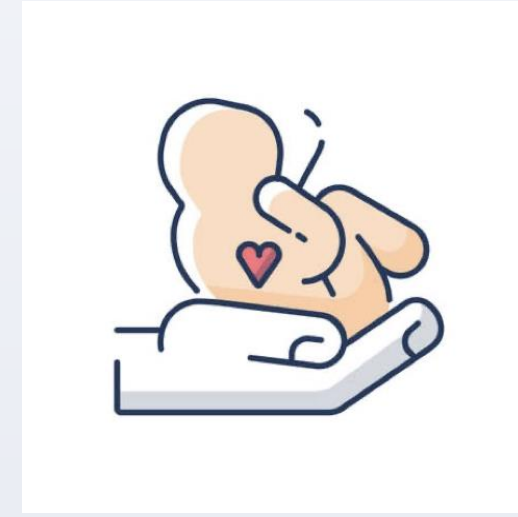
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Needs-Assessment Questionnaire Development Through the Interviews of Mothers Post Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Discharge: A Qualitative Study

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Introduction

- Current literature shows a gap in documenting the experiences and needs of mothers after being discharged home from the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).
- The literature that does exist suggests following discharge from the NICU, parents and caregivers of infants' report feelings of stress and anxiety and lower levels of competence in caring for their infants.
- A needs-assessment questionnaire can help to identify the needs of mothers.
- Additionally, literature highlights the importance of sensory interventions and the need for appropriate sensory experiences to be carried over into the home environment.

Objectives

- To enhance the understanding of the needs and experience of mothers after being discharged from the NICU with their infants.
- To create a needs-assessment questionnaire for mothers through a qualitative interview process.
- To create a needs-assessment questionnaire that will aid in providing mothers with needed resources to care for their infants.
- To create a sensory resource folder aimed at providing mothers with resources to aid in the sensory development of their infants once discharged home.

Summary of Needs Assessment

- Explore the needs of NICU mothers and their experiences throughout the NICU.
- Needs-assessment questionnaire to evaluate the specific needs of mothers for infant care and self-care.
- Sensory resources to enhance sensory care for infants at home.

Literature Review Summary

- Current literature suggests following discharge from the NICU, parents and caregivers of infants' report feelings of stress and anxiety and lower levels of competence in caring for their infants (Lakshmana et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019).
- There are discharge programs in existence to help combat these reported feelings however, there is a lack of exposure, resources, introduction of programs to healthcare practitioners, and a lack of participation from mothers and caregivers (Lee et al., 2019; Sobaih 2012).
- It is suggested that a screening tool be used to access mothers who have a great risk of not attending these programs (Ballantyne et al. 2021; Nwabara et al., 2017).
- Similarly, a questionnaire could also be used to identify the needs of mothers as well as identify those who are experiencing higher levels of stress and need additional support.
- Literature highlights the importance on sensory experiences for NICU infants. These sensory experiences have been linked to lowering maternal stress rates and improving infant development, indicating the need for these experiences to be carried over into the home environment (Pineda et al., 2017; Vitale et al., 2021).

Capstone Project Description

- A qualitative interview process was conducted, via Zoom, with a small group of mothers (n=5) who had experienced having an infant in the NICU.
- Qualitative responses to interviews-questions were coded and analyzed using a descriptive coding process described by Saldaña (2013).
- Using this coding process, codes were categorized and then separated into themes. These themes were used to aid in the development of the needs-assessment questionnaire.
- Sensory resources were gathered and placed into a Google Drive folder which can be shared with mothers to aid in the continued sensory development of their infants at home.

Descriptive Coding of Interviews

Descriptive Coding of Interviews with Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Mothers			
Codes	Categories	Themes	Quotes
Traumatic Experience	NICU Environment	Being a mother within the NICU environment is a traumatic experience	"...literally haunted me for a month and still even now, it does. I just felt hopeless I was just completely traumatized." "...I feel guilty that I did not enjoy the process, because I did not for a single moment did I see any beauty..."
Inconsistencies in education and communication Unsupportive Environment	NICU Personnel & Non NICU Personnel	There appears to be a gap in consistency of care, knowledge of care, and communication amongst NICU personnel as well as between NICU personnel and non NICU personnel	"In the regular nursery, honestly, it was just more frustrating than anything, just because they weren't used to caring for babies, who are a little lower acuity." "And they also didn't listen to the instructions that PT and OT and speech had left in the room."
Informative/Helpful Supportive Environment Therapy Services Provided Support Follow-Up from NICU Great Experience Discharge Readiness	Positive NICU Personnel Support for Mothers and Infants	NICU personnel, including nurses and therapists, provide a positive and supportive environment and experience for mothers and infants	"The nurses did such a good job at, you know, really lifting you up and making you feel competent." "I felt like they were taking care of us."
Feeling of Isolation Lack of Preparation for NICU Self-Preparation Lack of Discharge Readiness Lack of Postpartum Care Lack of NICU Follow-Up Lack of NICU Mother Support Groups	Non NICU Personnel Preparation and Postpartum Care for Mothers	Non NICU personnel may not be providing enough support for mothers prior to NICU admission and after NICU discharge	"I feel like there was more that could have been done... I had so many questions...I wish there was more information...for taking him home" "It was not really, let's discuss how to keep them alive, it was more like there's not much we can do."

Assessment of Caregiver Needs following Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Discharge

Assessment of Caregiver Needs following Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Discharge					
Purpose: to assess/measure the needs of caregivers in preparation for Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) admission and following NICU discharge.					
Instructions: based on your subject experience within the NICU, rate on a scale of 1-5 how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the prompts provided below. After completion, please answer the remaining questions in your own words based on your experience.					
Prompts Related to NICU Experience	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I felt prepared for my baby's NICU admission.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel that the NICU staff were supportive and helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I feel that the NICU staff communicated my needs and my baby's needs effectively with each other and with myself.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The NICU was a traumatic experience for me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I or my partner was provided with adequate postpartum care.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I felt prepared for discharge to home from the NICU.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I was provided with helpful resources prior to discharge.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I received adequate follow-up from the NICU staff after discharge.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My questions were all answered appropriately during the hospital stay.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My family's needs were met during my time within the NICU and after discharge.	1	2	3	4	5

Is there anything about your experience that you would like to have changed?

Do you have any needs that were not met prior to NICU admissions or after NICU discharge?

Learning Objectives Achieved

1. Effectively conducted open ended interviews with NICU mothers.
2. Utilized a descriptive coding process described by Saldaña (2013) to code interviews with NICU mothers.
3. Created a needs-assessment questionnaire based on themes developed through coding process.
4. Researched and developed sensory resources and folder for sensory development of infants for mothers for home use.

Discussion & Conclusion

- After interviews with all 5 participants were completed, a descriptive coding process described by Saldaña (2013), was used to identify codes, categories, and finally themes.
- Implications from developed themes include:
 - Health care inconsistencies
 - Lack of standardized guidelines for NICU discharge and postpartum care
 - Not all facilities are providing adequate NICU preparation for mothers
- The developed themes were used to create the Assessment of Caregiver Needs Following Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Discharge which, once validity is established, may be used by NICU departments and occupational therapists to begin establishing guidelines for care and providing resources for NICU mothers.



References & Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Amand Pignon, OTD, OTR/L for her continuous guidance and support throughout this capstone experience. I would also like to thank all the participants who willingly shared their personal experiences. Lastly, I would like to thank Christina Kane Ed. D., MS, OTR/L for her guidance and help throughout this experience and Mariana D' Amico, EdD, OTR/L, FAOTA for her valued guidance and expertise.

References Available Upon Request