Stress in the neonatal unit: Nurses, parents and infants' perspectives

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Introduction

- Worldwide, one in ten infants are born preterm;
- Preterm births may have many repercussions on the preterm infant itself, but also on his/her parents¹ and the NICU nurses²;
- Among these, stress has been well documented in the triad.

Presentation aim

- Describe stress sources in the NICU for the infant-parents-nurse triad;
- Discuss how stress lived by each members of the triad inter-influences the two other members.

Method

A thorough literature review was conducted in three databases: CINAHL, PubMed and Web of Science.

Key words

preterm birth, stress, NICU, parents, nurses, babies.

Results

Studies have shown that the parent's stress have a negative impact on the preterm infant while he/she is hospitalized as well as on the nurses. The stress of nurses also has an influence on the parents.

What stresses preterm babies ?

Environmental light & Sounds^{3,4}
Manipulations and care interventions^{5,6}
Treatments^{5,6}
Lack of parental presence⁷

What stresses parents ?

Technological environment⁸
Lack of physical proximity with their child
Alteration of parental role^{1,9}
Appearance and behaviour of their child⁹
Multiple birth, advanced parental age and very preterm birth are associated with a higher level of stress¹⁰

What stresses nurses ?

Anxious parents¹¹
Unstable infants^{11,12}
Uncertainty of infant's outcomes^{11,13}
Ethical Challenges¹³

INTERINFLUENCES

Conclusion & Recommendations

- To our knowledge no study reports the impact of infant stress on parents and nurses.
- Based on clinical practice, this inter-relation deserves further investigation.

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