

Improving Communication with Patient Transfers between Level 2 NICU and Level 4 NICU

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Background/Introduction:

Preterm infants require timely, advanced care. Not all neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) have the capability to care for all preterm infants (Bourque et.al., 2019). NICUs range from a level 1 which mostly cares for term, stable infants to a level 4 that can care for infants who are extremely low birth weight and infants requiring urgent surgery (Bourque et.al., 2019). An infant is transferred to a level 4 NICU when it becomes apparent that a higher level of care is necessary. This requires communication between the sending unit and the receiving NICU. When an infant arrives at the Level 4 NICU, information vital to the infant's care may be missing. While paper copies of the medical record travel with the infant, paging through them hinders care of the unstable infant (Kresch et.al., 2017). Personal interviews with NICU nurses reveal that incomplete/inadequate communication leads to confusion. Communication templates designed to capture vital information will enhance communication and reduce delays in care.

Goal:

Develop a tool to improve communication and handoff of patient care in between NICUs during transfers.

Product:

Standardized tool for handoff communication between NICUs

Objectives

- Conduct a literature review and interviews of nurses to better understand the communication barriers.
- Develop an evidence-based communication tool
- Implement the handoff tool for NICU use.
- Critique and revise the communication tool

Reflection

I learned to apply leadership skills into my practice. In many of my classes, many of the topics discussed were leadership development, skills of the leaders, and characteristics of a leader. In Honor's in Nursing, I was given opportunity to apply those skills. It gave me a platform and opportunity to practice leadership.

If someone was to ask me if Honor's in Nursing is worth it, I would tell them yes. If they want a totally different course in nursing where you are the instructor and the instructors are your coaches, then go for it. I found that honors stretched me and caused me to think critically about my project and apply the skills that I had been learning in the classroom.