

Developmental Care for Extremely Premature Infants

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Project Description

Background

In 2022, 52,000 infants were born extremely premature, classified as prior to 29 weeks' gestation (*Percentage of Babies*, 2022). They face an increased risk of mortality and development of short and long-term medical complications (Als, 1986; Altimier & Phillips, 2016). Developmental cares like positioning, holding, bathing, and sounds have been implemented to provide neuroprotective care for these vulnerable infants (Als, 1986; Ludwig et al., 2008; University of Iowa Healthcare, personal communication, March 2024). The University of Iowa Healthcare Neonatal Intensive Care Unit's current policy on developmental care categorizes all extremely premature infants into one category. However, emerging research demonstrates that different cares are necessary based on the infant's gestational weeks. Sharing newly identified evidence-based practices can equip interdisciplinary teams to provide more individualized care that better supports neurological development and improves outcomes for these infants.

Goal

The goal of this project is to conduct a comprehensive literature review on developmental care for extremely premature infant. Then, use the findings to educate Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) nurses on evidence-based practices.

Product

Educational infographic to inform for NICU nurses about current developmental care practices for extremely premature infants.

Objectives

1. Summarize the scientific literature regarding developmental care for extremely premature infants.
2. Create an educational presentation and infographic about the current policy on developmental care and emerging evidence-based practices.
3. Present the educational content to NICU nurses.
4. Submit summarization of literature review, education infographic, analysis of learning, and reference list to ICON for grading.

Project Reflection

One of the most valuable lessons I gained was the importance of open communication and the willingness to ask for help when needed. While completing my project, I often found myself trying to work through challenges on my own, even when I could have reached out and gained from guidance from others. I have always been hesitant to reach out to others because I worry about burdening people. However, this experience emphasized that asking for help is not a sign of weakness, and nursing relies heavily on collaboration and teamwork.

Overall, this experience helped me grow both as a student and as a future nurse, and I am grateful to have gained these lessons before beginning my career and possibly pursuing graduate school in the future.

References

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