

Introduction

The Vermont Oxford Network identified Family-Centered Care (FCC) as a potentially better practice and recognized this as a standard of care in the NICU (Horbar et al., 2003). FCC has been shown to enhance the overall quality of care provided in the NICU leading to parents who are less stressed and more confident in their role and an improved hospital experience (Cooper et al., 2007).

Problem:

While FCC is the recommended model of nursing care in the NICU, many neonatal nurses do not fully practice FCC (Trajkovski, Schmied, Vickers, & Jackson, 2012).

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to explore the discrepancy in the acceptance of FCC which is a standard of care and the lack of implementation of FCC practices by NICU nurses.

This project seeks to identify the perceptions of neonatal nurses about the practice of FCC and opportunities to enhance FCC.

Methodology

Research design: descriptive non-experimental study using a survey administered to the nursing staff of two NICUs in the upper Midwest United States.

Sample: NICU staff nurses including specialty shift coordinators.

Sample Size: 30 (16.8%)

Smaller NICU- 23 surveys distributed, 11 returned (47.8%)

Larger NICU- 155 surveys distributed, 19 returned (12.3%)

Measurement tool:

FCC survey comprised of open ended questions and a Likert scale of 1-5.

5 meaning a response of "all the time" 1 meaning a response of "not at all"

Measurement Tool

Family-Centered Care Survey

How many years of experience do you have working in a NICU? _____

Please answer the following questions using a 1-5 scale with 5 meaning a response of "all the time" and 1 meaning a response of "not at all".

	"not at all"			"all the time"		
Is family-centered care utilized within your NICU?	1	2	3	4	5	
Are the nurses educated on proper use of family-centered care?	1	2	3	4	5	
Are parents of the NICU patients receptive to family-centered care?	1	2	3	4	5	
Does the interdisciplinary team contribute to the practice of family-centered care?	1	2	3	4	5	
Is family-centered care beneficial to the care of patients in the NICU?	1	2	3	4	5	
Do you feel that more education is necessary in the topic of family-centered care?	1	2	3	4	5	

How would you describe "family-centered care"?

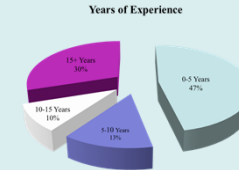
What are the current strengths and weaknesses of the practice of family-centered care within your NICU?

What three things would improve the family support program in your NICU?



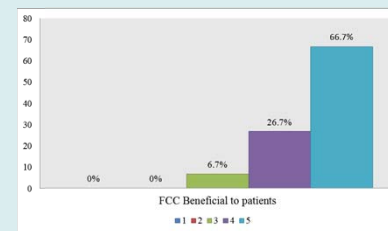
Findings

The experience of the thirty RN respondents ranged from less than one year to 33 years' experience as a NICU nurse with a mean of 11.5 years and median of 6.5 years.



Mean Scores of Survey Questions

QUESTIONS	Mean Score
Is family-centered care utilized within your NICU?	3.8
Are the nurses educated on proper use of family-centered care?	3.6
Are parents of the NICU patients receptive to family-centered care?	3.5
Does the interdisciplinary team contribute to the practice of family-centered care?	3.7
Is family-centered care beneficial to the care of patients in the NICU?	4.6
Do you feel that more education is necessary in the topic of family-centered care?	4.0



The nursing staff believed that FCC is beneficial to the patients (mean 4.6).

The nursing staff believed that more education was necessary on the topic of FCC.

Forty percent of the respondents correctly identified the mission statement.

Clinical Practice Implications

FCC is important in the NICU to improve outcomes and parent satisfaction. Neonatal nurses recognize the importance and benefits of FCC, but may require more education on the topic to become more proficient and confident in the important practice of FCC. Increased education on FCC would assist in the implementation of FCC in the NICU. Additionally, FCC unit guidelines should support the mission statement of the facility. The reason for 60% of the respondents' inability to write the mission statement of the facility should be explored. Lastly, every NICU is unique in its culture, location, layout, production, and mission statement. The open-ended responses in the survey from the respondents of two different unit layouts lead to differing viewpoints of FCC strengths and weaknesses.

Recommendations:

- An individual guideline for FCC in the NICU to reflect their unit needs and culture.
- Further research is needed to identify the knowledge base of NICU nurses on FCC.
- Needs assessment on orientation to each facility and unit protocols to facilitate use and understanding of mission statement.
- Facility education on the mission statement of the facility with correlation to improved outcomes and patient satisfaction is reasonable.
- Further studies on open-bay vs. single bed units and its effect on the implementation of FCC are recommended.

References

Cooper, L. G., Gooding, J. S., Gallagher, J., Stemesky, L., Ledsky, R., & Berns, S. D. (2007). Impact of family-centered care initiative on NICU care, staff and families. *Journal of Perinatology*, 27, S32-S37.

Horbar, J. D., Plsek, P. E., & Leahy, K. (2003). Establishing habits for improvement in neonatal intensive care units. *Pediatrics*, 111(4), e397-410.

Trajkovski, S., Schmied, V., Vickers, M., & Jackson, D. (2012). Neonatal nurses' perspectives of family-centered care: A qualitative study. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 21, 2477-2487.