Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder Screening in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: An Evidence-Based Maternal Mental Health Improvement Initiative

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BACKGROUND

- At a 40-50% incidence rate, mothers with an infant experiencing a NICU stay are at an increased risk for PMADs
- Multiple stressors, including but not limited to derailed birth plans and unexpected NICU admissions, can contribute to risk for PMAD
- PMAD can contribute to negative psychosocial and health outcomes for the mother, the mother's partner, and the infant

LOCAL PROBLEM

- The site is a 67-bed level III NICU of a large academic regional referral center in East Tennessee.
- PMAD screening was occurring in the facility's inpatient postpartum and outpatient obstetric areas, but not the NICU
- Mothers may miss routine opportunities for screening while their infant is in the NICU
- The purpose of this project was to initiate standardized PMAD screening for mothers with infants in the NICU.
- The aims of this project were:
  - Screen 70% of mothers with an infant NICU length of stay (LOS) of ≥ 2 weeks for PMAD
  - Provide 70% of screened mothers with mental health resources
  - Refer 60% of mothers with positive PMAD screening for further assessment and management

METHODS

- The Evidence-Based Practice Improvement model was used as the framework for this project, with PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) cycles driving project and practice change decision-making
- The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) was used for screening
- Literature search and critical appraisal of evidence yielded consistent evidence supporting screening mothers in the NICU for anxiety and depression using a validated screening tool
- Process and outcome measures were evaluated to assess progress toward the project's aims

Implementation of standardized screening improved PMAD screening for mothers with infants in the NICU.

Scan here to access the project's executive summary

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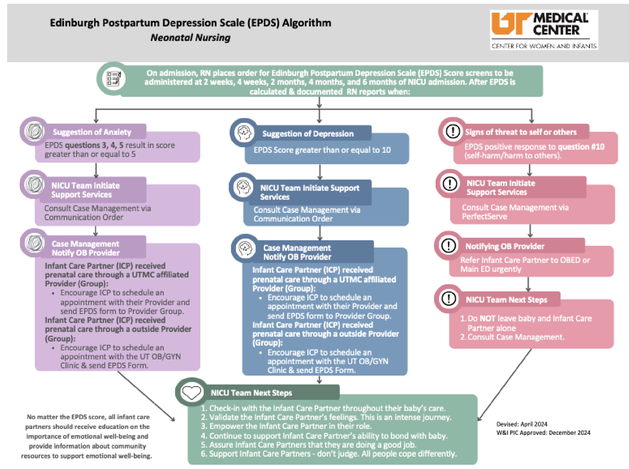
INTERVENTIONS

1) PMAD screening at 2 wk, 4 wk, and 2 mo
2) Mental health resources list provided at 2 wk screen
3) Case management consulted for positive screens



RESULTS

- 43% of mothers with an infant LOS of ≥ 2 weeks were screened for PMAD
- 14% of screened mothers were provided with mental health resources
- 71% of mothers with positive PMAD screenings were referred for further assessment and management

CONCLUSIONS

- Despite the project's screening aim not being achieved, nearly half of all mothers were screened
- Project champions were key assets to help drive the project's implementation
- Staff re-education, periodic data feedback, and an automatic screening order entry process will promote higher screening rates and sustainability

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