

Distress of Parents of NICU Graduates

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DISTRESS OF PARENTS OF NICU GRADUATES

Abstract

A neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) specializes in the care of premature or ill newborn infants. Within the NICU environment there are a variety of technological devices that are crucial to improving the health and survival rate of these infants; in the last fifty years this technology has become more advanced. Parents of infants admitted to the NICU can often find themselves in a state of distress that begins at the time of hospitalization, but can continue during the discharge process and beyond. The author conducted a literature review to elucidate the state-of-the-science regarding the needs of parents of NICU graduates post-discharge and effective strategies to reduce distress for parents. While there are a variety of support systems available during the infant's NICU stay, a gap exists regarding support for parents post-NICU discharge. Specifically, it is important to examine the experience of parents in the first month post-discharge. The findings from this literature review set the stage for future research by designing a technology-based support system intervention to meet parental needs of NICU graduates in the month following hospital discharge. references were identified via PubMed and CINAHL databases using the keywords "NICU", "parents", "discharge", "newborn graduates", "preterm", "technology", "support".