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Title: To investigate and compare the maternal needs as perceived by mothers and nurses in the neonatal intensive care unit

ABSTRACT

Ceci & McIntyre (2001) have commented that the maternal expectations of nursing care and nurses' ability to meet the expectations is even less certain, particularly within the current health care environment which has inadequate staffing levels. In order to have clear picture, the aim of this study was to investigate and compare between and priorities of mother's and nurses' perception of maternal needs.

The objective was to explore the importance of and the relationship between the perceived maternal needs from mothers and nurses and their demographic variable.

The reason for this study was to be appeared an under studied area in neonatal nursing though most of studies were conducted based on the prioritizing the parents' needs in the Pediatric intensive care settings.

The significance of this study is important for nurses to consider the individual needs of the mothers, simply because the satisfaction of these needs is essential for mother-infant bonding and will be helpful to developments of infants and even positive mother-nurse interaction.

In this study the perceived maternal needs of mothers whose babies staying and nurses working in neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) were explored and the relationship between them were investigated.

The quantitative and descriptive study was employed for this study. There were 30 mothers and 30 nurses recruited in the NICU setting of a regional hospital in Hong Kong by random sampling.

The Leske's (1991) Critical Care Family Needs Inventory (CCFNI) was used to modified version from 45 items to 37 items based on a 4 -point Likert scale and divided into four main categories: informational need, proximity need, emotional need and personal need as an instrument. Each questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section was aimed at gathering the demographic information from the mothers and nurses. The second section used the modified CCFNI. The third section identified who would be most likely to assist in meeting maternal needs. Data collection was completed around 2-months.

Independent T- test was calculated to detect the mean ranking between mothers' and nurses' perceived maternal needs. The 10 most important and 10 least important maternal needs were identified by mothers and nurses and the results were compared. The non-parametric tests were (Mann- Whitney U test and Krusal- Wallis test) used to show the

significant differences in their perceptions on maternal needs in terms of prioritization. As a result, it appeared that informational needs were important in the mothers' and nurses' perception. This study also worked out that mothers' and nurses, demographic factor were contributory factor to accurate assessment on maternal needs.

In general, the findings were consistent with those in previous studies using the Critical Care Family Needs Inventory. One striking difference was the low ranking accorded by mothers and nurses to the need "to feel there was hope". In this study, most maternal needs ranked by mothers and nurses were more or less the same. They ranked informational needs were the highest whilst the personal needs were the lowest.

Mothers whose baby staying in NICU need information related to baby' s condition instead of their emotional and personal needs. Only they need to feel assured that their loved baby is being given the best care which is the most emotional support for them. Therefore, there was significant difference that the mothers ranked highest than the nurses in terms of informational needs while the nurses ranked highest than the mothers in terms of emotional and personal needs.

Some implications for nursing clinical practices, education and research levels were proposed in order to promote the quality and holistic health care that provided by the NICU nurses. This study contributes to the body of knowledge in maternal needs and stimulates the understanding of nurses as well as other health care professionals in providing mothers support with a variety of interventions.