

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Nurses Experiences Regarding Parent Decision Making For Extremely Low Birth Weight Infants

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Neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) nurses play an important role in caring for extremely low birth weight infants (ELBW) and these patients are at a much greater risk of abnormal development. The NICU is unique in that the infant's parents are their primary advocates, but they lack the medical background to comprehend their child's condition. Parents also experience high anxiety and stress; consequently, aspects of decision-making may be overlooked due to inadequate amounts of information. NICU nurses must provide accurate and consistent information and emotional support to ELBW infant parents to help with decision-making. The **purpose** of this study is to describe NICU nurses' experiences in aiding parents in decision-making regarding their ELBW infant and to identify if a visual aid would be useful during this difficult process. This research is based on 2 of 3 components of the Ottawa Decision Support Framework (ODSF): the evaluation of the needs of the healthcare team necessary for decision making and the evaluation of the healthcare team when providing individualized aid to parents. Using a qualitative descriptive design, five English-speaking nurses with at least one year of experience in the NICU were interviewed. The nurses ranged from 28-55 years of age and had a bachelor's or master's degree in nursing. Prior to the semi-structured interview, consent to participate was acknowledged and eligibility and demographic forms were completed. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed, and they were qualitatively analyzed. Findings will be used to evaluate nurses' experiences, including how prepared they felt in providing information and support to parents, and to determine whether visual aids were used or would be useful to help nurses' communication and parents' decision-making.

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