

Standardization of Early Feeding Skills (EFS) scale in preterm infants

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Abstract

Introduction: The Early Feeding Skills (EFS) scale assessed the neonate's behavior before, during, and after the feeding process. Objectives: To determine the face and content validity, and to evaluate with this scale the feeding process in premature newborns comparing with relevant variables.

Patients and Method: Premature newborns were evaluated; they were between 34 to 36 weeks of corrected age, without neurological damage or craniofacial malformations. Cross-sectional descriptive study. The data were obtained through the EFS scale, version corrected by face and content validation. The study variables were gender, breastfeeding achievement, and feeding skills during the feeding process, evaluated by two observers. Dispersion measures were analyzed, and the Fisher test was used at 5% significance, establishing the association of the obtained results with the variables.

Results: 5 domains were evaluated: (1) Ability to stay focused on food, in which 75.3% have a poor performance level, and 28.6% equitable, with significant differences in the sex variable. (2) Ability to organize motor oral functioning presents 10.5% deficient, 68.8% equitable, and 20.6% good. (3) Ability to coordinate swallowing 95.2% presents an equitable performance. (4) Ability to maintain physiological stability 96.7% was equitable; and (5) Evaluation of oral food tolerance presents 41.6% of poor performance.

Conclusion: The EFS scale is a tool that provides relevant information to describe the oral feeding process in premature infants, allowing to identify the areas of greatest difficulty that require professional treatment, however, this tool is not enough by itself to carry a comprehensive evaluation of the newborn feeding process.

Keywords: Preterm; oral feeding; swallowing; evaluation.



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