

EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS WITH NEONATES IN THE NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT AT THE UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL, LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

Wanda H. Mulundu and Prof. Margaret C. Maimbolwa
University of Zambia, School of Nursing, Zambia

Abstract

Introduction: Neonatal health is a major concern globally and in Zambia, and the deaths are 24/1000 live births. Most of these deaths are caused by infections, prematurity, low birth weight, asphyxia, and birth trauma. Parents of a hospitalized neonate are anxious about their neonates condition and do not receive adequate emotional care during the time of hospitalization. Method: This study aimed at exploring the experiences of parents whose neonates have been admitted to the University Teaching Hospital, in Lusaka, Zambia. A qualitative approach was used. The study setting was The University Teaching Hospital, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Lusaka. The sample consisted of 4 male and 11 female biological parents to the neonates admitted to NICU. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed through thematic analysis and N-vivo version 10 software. And semi- structured observations of parents, neonates and health workers were conducted.

Results: Caregivers of neonates in NICU do not communicate adequately to the parents of neonates in NICU. This lack of information about the condition of the child causes stress and anxiety in the parents because they are not allowed to have access to the hospital files of their own children. Parents lack emotional support from the caregivers because the caregivers would shout at them. Parents also complained about the bad attitude of the caregivers towards the mothers. Mothers that just had a Caesarian section are not provided with wheel chairs to move to the NICU to breast feed their neonates.

Conclusion: Parents of neonates need emotional support and information about the child. Policy makers should introduce day rooms for parents near the NICU to make it easy for the parents. The NICU supervisors should supervise the nurses on every shift to ensure that neonates and parents are cared for accordingly.

Keywords: Neonates, Intensive Care Unit, Experiences, Parents, Neonates

Author Biography: Margaret Connie Maimbolwa, RNM, DNE, BScN, PhD, is a PhD nurse-midwife, Professor, Researcher and senior Lecturer at School of Nursing, University of Zambia who is a lecturer, researcher, consultant and was assistant Dean for undergraduate programs at the School of Medicine for 9 years, University of Zambia, Lusaka. She received her PhD from Karolinska Institutet in Sweden. She has taken part in many research projects within Zambia in relation to maternal and child survival.