

Question:

In NICU parents, how does the “baby steps” discharge checklist compare to no checklist affect the transition to home care for the infant?

Summary:

Using the “baby steps” discharge checklist has helped organizations discharge families from the NICU with the necessary skills to care for their new infant. “Assessing readiness and confidence at an early stage and continuing to do so throughout the hospital stay may provide additional ways for nurses to identify parents' knowledge gaps and to provide tailored interventions at more opportune times before hospital discharge.” (Hua et al., 2020) “Discharge readiness is a key determinant of outcomes for families in the NICU. NICU discharge readiness has been defined as the masterful attainment of technical skills and knowledge, emotional comfort, and confidence with infant care by the primary caregivers at the time of discharge,” (Gupta et al., 2019) According to research provided by *Pediatrics*, “Family self-assessment of discharge readiness increased from 85.1% to 89.1%; nurse assessment of the family's emotional discharge readiness increased from 81.2% to 90.5%, and technical discharge readiness increased from 81.4% to 87.7%.” (Gupta et al., 2019) Without this discharge checklist along with providing necessary education to new parents, “there is an increased risk of readmission because parents may not seek medical attention appropriately, administer medications and other therapies correctly or have confidence in their home management of non-acute medical problems.” (Smith, 2022)

Conclusion:

In conclusion, after reading multiple research articles about the discharge readiness of parents of NICU babies, having the “baby steps” discharge checklist helps improve the transition to home care. With this checklist more parents feel better prepared and confident to care for their infant. “Another component of discharge planning is to make sure that arrangements for follow-up outpatient care have been completed and that the family has obtained the necessary skills and education required to care for their baby in their home environment.” (Smith, 2022) Parents also learn signs or cues of their infant's needs and symptoms for illnesses that can come up before the next follow-up appointment and if they need to go to the hospital for them. Nurses witness the parents care for their child and can give their input if the parents need guidance along with gauging their readiness to go home.

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Works Cited:

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Smith, V. C. (2022). NICU discharge preparation and transition planning: introduction. *Journal of Perinatology*, 42(5-6). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41372-022-01312-w>