

**NICU Quality of Care: Quality Improvement**

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Quality improvement is essential in nursing because healthcare is a forever-changing field. Quality improvement aims to determine below optimal outcomes and how to change those outcomes into optimal results. Knowledge is vital to quality improvement due to understanding the clinical setting (QSEN Institute, 2020). Flow charts and gathering data are a form of skills in quality improvement to understand the cause of suboptimal outcomes (QSEN Institute, 2020). Readers should know that quality improvement is forever changing, and the attitude should be that quality improvement is continuous in the healthcare setting (QSEN Institute, 2020). The article is a qualitative quality improvement study to determine unequal care to neonatal intensive care unit patients and families (Sigurdson et al., 2018). Every patient and family should have equal treatment in the healthcare field, and this study is essential to improve the quality of care for all patients equally.

### **Article Summary**

This article highlights the unequal treatment of patients and families within the neonatal intensive care unit (Sigurdson et al., 2018). The article discusses that a convenience survey is the sampling method for participants to describe care during a neonatal intensive care unit stay (Sigurdson et al., 2018). The article suggested that vulnerable populations may have a higher incidence of unequal care (Sigurdson et al., 2018). Quality improvement throughout all neonatal intensive care units can increase quality and equal care for all patients and their families.

### **Introduction**

This article is a qualitative study on unequal care for neonatal intensive care unit patients and their families due to racial and ethnic disparities (Sigurdson et al., 2018). The article highlights this unequal care because health care workers are not communicating with the families of the NICU infants, which can cause a lack of optimal care (Sigurdson et al., 2018). This article is related to quality improvement because suboptimal care can improve to give optimal care to all patients equally.

### **Overview**

The article about neonatal intensive care unit discrepancies and unequal health care can affect all hospital neonatal intensive care units. Fair and equal treatment for everyone is a foundation for nursing and healthcare. Finding a research article that describes unequal treatment for patients can affect the health care system. This article describes that the qualitative research uses a survey and acknowledges that each participant may have a different view of suboptimal care (Sigurdson et al., 2018). The QSEN competency in quality improvement uses skill in this research article is a convenience survey handed out (QSEN Institute, 2020; Sigurdson et al., 2018). Furthermore, the QSEN competency of the attitude in this research article is that a small percentage of people allowed to fill out the survey decided to be participants (QSEN Institute, 2020; Sigurdson et al., 2018). This small percentage led to the researchers understanding that most of the sample population did not feel unequal treatment in the neonatal intensive care unit (Sigurdson et al., 2018).

### **Quality Improvement**

This research article talks explicitly about neonatal intensive care units in any hospital as a candidate for unequal healthcare (Sigurdson et al., 2018). Change to equal care for all patients will cause a pre-implementation stage of educating all health care workers about fair and equal treatment to all patients and their families. Intra-implementation stage or equal care can include documenting the care given to every patient, explicitly involving the family, and communicating with the family. This research article specifically states a lack of care because the family was not involved in the patient care (Sigurdson et al., 2018). A post-implementation stage includes sending surveys to every neonatal intensive care unit family within one month of discharge. The completed surveys can cause data analysis for improvements in quality care. Financially this can affect the hospital significantly due to the education needed for all health care workers and sending surveys. Patient satisfaction should increase if there is equal treatment for all patients. Nursing satisfaction can reduce due to extra time for education and extra documentation. Implementing equal care will increase patient safety because every patient has access to equal care. Nursing safety will increase because there will be more documentation and fewer malpractice disputes because of the equal treatment and extra patient documentation.

### **Application to Nursing**

Unequal healthcare, specifically related to the neonatal intensive care unit, describes a language barrier as one component of this problem. Translators are available in the nursing practice to reduce unequal care due to a language barrier. Education is essential to lower unequal healthcare in the neonatal intensive care unit by requiring cultural competence education for a certified baccalaureate program in nursing. A more substantial research study needs to be in

place to determine if there is unequal health care related to ethnical or racial discrepancies in the neonatal intensive care unit.

### **Practice**

The article discussed throughout this paper reveals a report on unequal healthcare in neonatal intensive care units (Sigurdson et al., 2018). One of the components of unequal care is a language barrier (Sigurdson et al., 2018). The best nursing practice for this specific component is that in the healthcare field, for a client or family that does not speak the same language as the caretaker, a translator is available to describe the care of the patient and any questions the patient or family has.

### **Education**

Unequal care in the neonatal intensive care unit is due to a lack of cultural competence and racial/ ethnic discrepancies, as many reports in the article selected (Sigurdson et al., 2018). Specifically, in baccalaureate nursing education, cultural competency is a topic that is a requirement in the American Association of Colleges of Nursing curriculum (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, n.d.). The best way to combat racial and ethnic discrepancies in the healthcare field is to educate on the importance of cultural competency. This education can benefit the reports of discrepancies in the neonatal intensive care unit and improve overall client health.

### **Research**

The neonatal intensive care unit study highlights the possible problem of unequal healthcare-related to ethnical and racial discrepancies and requires further research into this problematic area (Sigurdson et al., 2018). One of the biggest priorities going forward is to determine if this is, in fact, a fault in the healthcare system. A requirement for a different survey method would help further research. Every neonatal intensive care unit's family should report the care given regardless of the negative or positive of the experience. Further research should include an analysis of adverse patient outcomes that correlate with unequal healthcare.

### **Conclusion**

Quality improvement is forever changing in the healthcare field. Quality improvement is also necessary for healthcare because lives are at risk in this field. Anyone working in healthcare should want the best for patients, and quality improvement will drastically help achieve optimum health care. Quality improvement involves data on outcomes and cares to improve the quality and safety of patients (QSEN Institute, 2020). Knowledge of quality improvement can be an example of understanding that there are different views of optimal care (QSEN Institute, 2020; Sigurdson et al., 2018). Skills in quality improvement use tools such as a survey like this research article provide (QSEN Institute, 2020; Sigurdson et al., 2018). Quality improvement highlights the attitude that quality improvement is forever changing (QSEN Institute, 2020; Sigurdson et al., 2018). Racial and ethnic discrepancies in the neonatal intensive care unit are causing unequal treatment for patients (Sigurdson et al., 2018). Quality improvement is vital to combat this unequal treatment. A change using quality improvement can result in fewer malpractice lawsuits, increased positive patient outcomes, and increased nursing knowledge of cultural competency. Improved nursing practice, education, and further research are vital in quality improvement to reduce unequal health care in the neonatal intensive care unit.

## References

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