

9th International Conference on

Neonatology and Pediatric Neurology

November 28-30, 2016 Valencia, Spain

Retinopathy of prematurity: Improving parental awareness and perceived importance of follow-up eye exams using an informative pamphlet (Interim Report)

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Introduction: Retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) is the pathological development of retinal vasculature effecting low birth weight preterm infants. Successful treatment to prevent blindness depends on adherence to timely eye screening examinations of at-risk infants. Failure to follow up for these exams has led to tragic cases of blindness that were potentially preventable. We examined the effectiveness of a user-friendly pamphlet in improving parents' perceived importance of and ultimate adherence to ROP screening guidelines.

Methods: We provided an informative pamphlet on ROP to parents of infants with low birth weight (<1500 g) and preterm (<32 weeks) infants. Before and after reading the pamphlet, the parents were given a topical quiz on ROP as well as a Likert scale (1-5) on their level of perceived importance for timely follow-up screening.

Results: All 9 babies in our study successfully presented to their first screening exam as scheduled. Before reading the pamphlet, 2 of the 9 parents chose lower than a 5 (Extremely Important) on the Likert scale for perceived importance of follow up eye exams. However, after reading the pamphlet, all parents marked importance of follow-up as 5 out of 5.

Discussion: All parents understood timely follow-up exams to be extremely important after reading the pamphlet. Therefore, we suggest providing user friendly, informative material on ROP to parents of pre-term infants could help reduce the rate of loss to follow-up and thus potentially preventable vision loss in these patients.

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Perception of kangaroo care in German neonatology: A nationwide survey

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Background: Kangaroo care (KC) involves the infant being placed on its mother's or father's bare chest in prone position and is thought to have a positive impact on infants and improves bonding. Data on its practical performance and outcomes are scarce.

Methods: A semi-structured questionnaire inquiring about the use and perception of kangaroo care was sent to the heads of all neonatology departments and children's hospitals with a neonatal ward in Germany.

Results: The response rate was 51%. Among responders, 98% used KC. Performance instructions for the staff was provided in 25%, 41% had hygiene regulations for parents. Special chairs were provided in 89%. 85% used additional music, 20% used light therapy and 5% aroma therapy. Security precautions existed in 31%, 26% monitored O₂/CO₂ transcutaneously, 18% restrict the number of kangarooing infants in parallel, and 24% demanded a physician on the ward at the time of KC. A minimum gestational age was required in 91%; 86% required a minimum postnatal age and 88% a minimum body weight. In 21%, precautions were taken before using KC. Among these, a normal cranial ultrasound was the most common (45%) requirement.

Conclusions: This is the first survey on the use, perception, and exploration of outcome of kangaroo care by medical staff in Germany. Although the survey reflects opinions rather than facts, the results show that the use of KC correlates with the level of neonatal care and experience of the staff. The study provides detailed information on the perception of the conditions and limitations of KC and offers a useful basis for further research.

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