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Awareness and Education Improve Quality of Care through Better Utilization of Pediatric Palliative Care Services in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

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Abstract:

Background & Significance: Previously, PPC services were utilized in NICU for EOL (End of Life) related support. Advances in care for complex neonatal conditions have resulted in improved survival rates, longer stay, complexity, and increased parental stress. PPC support has become the standard of care for better understanding of family values regarding a complex condition. Our project examines the effect of education on improved utilization of PPC services.

Problem statement: An attempt to utilize trigger criteria for PPC consultation in our unit was resisted due to various reasons. This project was planned to help improve the standard of care through improved PPC utilization through education of providers based on their perceptions and parent perspective.

Methods: The project was conducted between August 2020 to August 2021. Interventions included provider and parent surveys, and planned education regarding PPC services.

Analysis: The survey resulted in most medical providers being “unsure” of trigger criteria and agreed that learning parental perspectives and education regarding the scope of PPC would be helpful. All parents who received services at various stages of NICU stay responded about PPC support's vital and beneficial role. An educational session was held by a PPC provider about the scope and breadth of PPC. A detailed review of the total number and reasons for PPC consultations six months before and after the project was conducted.

Results: The total percentage of infants receiving PPC services was similar (69% vs 74%), but the percentage of consults for quality of life increased after education compared to pre-education (55% vs 81%).

Discussion/conclusions: A thorough understanding of the scope of PPC is essential for neonatal providers to provide customized care to NICU parents. To keep knowledge current, this education needs to be incorporated into the regular curriculum for nursing and medical providers.

Key Words: Pediatric, Palliative Care, Neonatal Intensive Care