

Evaluation of the implementation of Infant & Family-centred Developmental Care practises in Cyprus Neonatal Units: The «DeVeLop NICU LIFE» study

Background

Infant and Family-centred Developmental Care (IFCDC) framework is recognised as a gold standard for the NICU environment, yet it's implementation in clinical practice remains a challenge worldwide.

Objectives

«DeVeLop NICU LIFE» study aims to design an intervention for the effective implementation of IFCDC framework in Cyprus NICU's using a Participatory Action Research approach.

Methods

The study is conducted in 4 phases with the participation of all stakeholders (Parents, NICU staff, Hospital Administrators, NICU Advocates), a mixed methodology and a sequential explanatory design. The first step involved the assessment of current clinical practices of the two existing NICU's (N1, N2), according to the framework of IFCDC, by a representative team of Healthcare Professionals (Neonatologists, Nurses, Midwives, Physiotherapists) from each unit using the Evaluation Lists of Family & Infant Neurodevelopmental Education - FINE. Eleven evaluation domains were scored for each unit, and a mean percentage score was calculated per domain.

Results

Overall, implementation of the IFCDC framework was low and ranged from 9.3% to 55.5%. Seven out of eleven domains scored less than 40%. Better implementation for both NICU's was identified for «Bedding & Positioning» (N1=55.5%, N2=52.7%) and «Skin to skin contact» (N1=47.6%, N2=40.4%). Among the lowest scores were «Staff Support & Development» (N1=11.7%, N2=11.7%) and «Parent Participation» (N1=14.2, N2=23.8%). Differences were seen in «Nursery Values» (N1=22.2%, N2=55.5%) and «Feeding practices» (N1=53.5%, N2=28.5%).

Conclusions

Despite some good practices in the implementation of IFCDC in Cyprus NICU's, there is a need to enhance practices in most areas of the framework. Investigating the barriers to the implementation and mapping those to the Theoretical Domains Framework in the next phases of the study will enable the design of intervention.