

P01-259 - SUPPORTING THE NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE PARENT - RESEARCH INTO PARENTAL SUPPORTS AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE INTENSIVE CARE EXPERIENCE IN AUSTRALIA

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Objective: In 2008 a new support group based on psycho-educational principles, attachment theory and neurodevelopmental practice, began at the Womens and Childrens Hospital (WCH) in South Australia. This group caters for parents, grandparents and other carers, who have children in neonatal intensive care and special care nurseries.

2 years of research have been done to evaluate the parent experience of neonatal intensive care and the support networks available for parents.

Method: Qualitative interviews have been performed with parents who have attended the group. The 1st set taken when their babies were in the nursery and then 5 months post discharge. Interviews with nursing staff who work within the nursery were also completed in 2009. A survey study using the PSS-NICU is underway at present and will conclude in late 2010.

Results: The parent interviews were reviewed with framework analysis and indicated a number of themes. The main theme was the loss of control of the parental relationship and the distress at sharing their child with nursing staff. Nursing staff interviews were analysed with framework analysis and the main theme was of chronic parental distress and difficulties managing the parental grief.

Conclusions: These results indicate that psychological support should be focussed on 1. the attachment relationship in trauma and 2. dealing with grief at deviating from the normal parenting experience. These results were used to provide modifications to our parent group and to structure education and support for nursing staff in the intensive care unit.

Keywords: Prematurity, early-intervention, attachment.