A Program to Improve Exclusive Breastfeeding of Premature Infants in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

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ABSTRACT

Breast milk is an important nutrition source to premature infants, but the exclusive breastfeeding rate was only 23.3% at our neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) in 2009. The aim of this project was to increase the breastfeeding rate for premature infants in NICU. Before this project was implemented, only 58.1% of mothers and their families were given breastfeeding instructions for the premature infants, nurses had a correct response rate of 63.5% in knowledge about breastfeeding premature infants, and only 29.5% of mothers and their families were followed for their breastfeeding practices. During this project proceeding, we had several improvements, include organizing lectures where nurses conduct breastfeeding education for mothers of premature infant, drafting breastfeeding checklist, conducting phone interviews with postnatal mothers at home, drafting guidelines on breastfeeding premature infant, and encouraging family members to participate in breastfeeding classes and kangaroo care. After these improvements were implemented, the execution rate of breastfeeding instructions to mothers and their families by the nursing staffs improved from 58.1% to 93.1% and the breastfeeding rate for premature infants increased from 23.3% to 67.5%. Results from this program can be applied to clinical settings to improve the rate of breastfeeding by mothers to premature infants. (Tzu Chi Nursing Journal, 2012; 11:2, 70-81)

Keywords: breastfeeding, neonatal intensive care unit, premature infant

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