Nurses accompanying families during newborn’s end of life: a pilot study

Giulio Pilot¹, Maria Benetton²
1-Hospital Villa Tommasi, Spresiano
2-University of Padua

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Abstract

Goal. To explore the role of neonatal nurses during the end of life of newborns, their personal experiences and feelings.

Subjects and methods. Nurses of an Italian NICU. An ad hoc 20-item questionnaire was administered with close and open end questions.

Results. 29 NICU nurses participated. Accompanying a newborn's family towards the end of life of their child is a painful experience even in long time, experienced nurses. Nurses underlined the need to improve the support given by the Hospital to families during this pathway. Emotional support between colleagues is reported as frequently used to cope with the death of a newborn.

Conclusion. Peer to peer support seems to play an important role among NICU nurses to deal with emotional distress due to end of life care to newborns and their families.