



# Factors associated with parents' satisfaction with care provided in a neonatal intensive care unit in Greece

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Available online 26 January 2016

## KEYWORDS

Factors;  
Infants;  
Needs;  
Neonatal intensive care unit;  
Nurses;  
Satisfaction

**Abstract Objectives:** (a) To evaluate parents' satisfaction with care provided in neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), (b) to explore factors associated with this parents' satisfaction and (c) to identify specific unmet needs of parents with infants in NICU.

**Methods:** We conducted a cross-sectional study. The study population consisted of 301 parents. Outcome variable was parents' satisfaction as measured with the questionnaire that used in the Picker Institute NICU survey. Predictor variables included sociodemographic characteristics of the parents, pregnancy characteristics and medical history of infants.

**Results:** Parents were satisfied in a great way with care provided to their infants in the NICU. Non-Greek parents, parents with infants that breast-fed, parents with infants in single birth and parents with infants outside infection isolation room were more satisfied.

**Conclusions:** The evidence obtained in this study provide some direction as to what is important and satisfying to parents whose infants hospitalized in the NICU.

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## Introduction

Neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) is a dynamic and sometimes chaotic environment. Parents of infants admitted to NICUs experience a particularly distressing, unfamiliar and threatening situation and need to receive information and support from nurses and physicians. In today's consumer-driven society, clients' satisfaction of hospital services is an important indicator of the quality and effectiveness of services offered. In a broad sense, satisfaction could be considered as patients' judgment about the quality of care received (Donabedian, 1988). So, evaluating parents' satisfaction and their needs concerning care provided in NICUs is essential for healthcare professionals and administrators to provide rational and qualitative care.

Also, understanding of the factors that influence parents' satisfaction with care provided in a NICU is critical. Recently, Butt et al. (2013) performed an integrative review synthesizing the research findings on (a) parents' degree of satisfaction with care provided in the NICU, (b) factors associated with parents' satisfaction with care, (c) elements of care parents view as important, and (d) discrepancies between parents expectations and actual ratings of care. Moreover, Cleveland (2008) conducted a systematic literature review to find out the needs of parents who have infants in the NICU and the behaviors support these parents.

Nurses must assist parents during this difficult experience. Obviously, there is a need for nurses to understand the factors associated with parents' satisfaction with care in NICU and the needs of parents and how to address them. Continuing reliable and valid research in this area is the key to doing this successfully. Recently, Tsironi et al. (2012) performed a similar study in Greece but they investigated only sociodemographic factors that could be associate with parents' satisfaction with care in NICU. So, we performed an expanded study in this scientific area with the following objectives: (a) to evaluate parents' satisfaction with care provided in NICU, (b) to explore sociodemographic factors of the parents, pregnancy factors and medical history of infants associated with parents' satisfaction with care and (c) to identify specific unmet needs of parents with infants in NICU.

## Methods

### Study design and participants

We conducted a cross-sectional study. The inclusion criteria for the study were the following: (a)

infants' age 1–30 days at the day of admission at the NICU, (b) hospitalization at the NICU (level, I, II, III or infection isolation room) at least for three days, (c) parents that their infants did not die during hospitalization in the NICU, (d) parents that had proficiency in Greek and understood the questions that had to answer and (e) parents that were mothers or fathers of infants and not any other relatives. The source population consisted of all parents ( $n = 324$ ) that met the above criteria and also their infants hospitalized in a consecutive way during 1st January to 31st 2013 in the NICU of the public children's hospital "Panayiotis & Aglaia Kyriakou" in Athens, Greece. The study population consisted of 301 parents that accepted to participate in the study and returned completed the questionnaire. Obviously, a convenience sample and not a random sample was used. At first, parents were informed about the protocol and the aim of the study and then they gave their informed consent for participation in the study and filled out voluntarily the anonymous questionnaire at discharge without time limitations and without the presence of the staff in order to reduce systematic error. Response rate was extremely high (92.9%, 301 out of 324), also for the native population (90.5%, 154 out of 170) and for the immigrants (95.5%, 147 out of 154). The NICU of the public children's hospital "Panayiotis & Aglaia Kyriakou" is the only one in Greece that parents can be present 24 h a day, 7 days a week. Also, this hospital is one of the two biggest public children's hospitals in Greece, where a wide range and a great number of cases are hospitalized.

### Outcome variable

Outcome variable was parents' satisfaction as measured with the questionnaire that used in the Picker Institute NICU survey (McCormick et al., 2008). Authors of the questionnaire gave us the written permission to use it in our study. The English version of the questionnaire was translated to Greek applying the "translation and back translation technique" (Burns and Grove, 1997). A pilot study with 25 parents was conducted in order to evaluate the face validity and the internal reliability of the questionnaire by calculating the Cronbach's alpha. Face validity of the questionnaire was very good, since only a few phrasal changes were made in order to improve the understanding of the questions especially for the non-native participants. Cronbach's alpha for the pilot study was 0.81 and for the final study was 0.87 indicating very good internal reliability. The questionnaire consists of 12 items with responses

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