Pediatric Nurses’ Attitudes and Knowledge Regarding the Provision of Breastfeeding Support in a Pediatric Medical Center

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Introduction

Breastfeeding gives all neonates the best nutritional start in life. Successful breastfeeding depends, in part, on the support of the nursing staff caring for the breastfeeding dyad. Infants are admitted to pediatric hospitals and mothers look to pediatric nurses to provide breastfeeding support and encouragement.

Purpose

Determine knowledge and attitudes of pediatric nurses regarding the provision of breastfeeding support.

Research Questions

1. What are pediatric nurses’ knowledge about breastfeeding and providing breastfeeding support?
2. What are pediatric nurses’ attitudes about breastfeeding and providing breastfeeding support?
3. Is there a relationship between pediatric nurses’ breastfeeding knowledge and personal breastfeeding experience?
4. Is there a relationship between pediatric nurses’ attitudes toward breastfeeding and providing breastfeeding support and personal breastfeeding experience?

Background

Lack of literature regarding pediatric nurses’ breastfeeding knowledge and breastfeeding support.

Studies of pediatricians, dieticians, and nurses found that providers with previous breastfeeding experience = positive attitudes and/or knowledge towards providing breastfeeding support.

Most nurses obtain their breastfeeding knowledge & experience in college.

Educational interventions have shown to improve attitudes and knowledge of nurses towards provision of breastfeeding support.

Methods

Descriptive survey design

Sample & Setting:
- Convenience sample of 145 registered nurses in a large pediatric medical center
- Acute Medical
- Cardiac Step Down
- Cardiac Intensive Care

Instruments

Demographic Survey (12-item)
- Highest Degree in Nursing
- Age
- Years Employed in Position
- Highest Degree in Nursing
- Ever Breastfed an Infant

Breastfeeding Survey (40-item)
- Knowledge
- Attitude

Results

Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31.6 years (M)</td>
<td>8.705 (SD)</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>32-61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Employed in Position</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>6-11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11 years</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12-17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17 years</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18-30 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Degree in Nursing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Diploma</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>71-112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSN</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>49-93.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSN</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Non-applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ever Breastfed an Infant</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Did not answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Non-applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge & Attitude Scores for nurses with personal breastfeeding experience or no personal breastfeeding experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>32-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>71-112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant relationship between knowledge and attitude scores (r=-.29, p<.024)

Conclusion

Study findings add to the body of evidence that pediatric nurses have marginal knowledge and attitudes to provide breastfeeding support in pediatric medical centers.

Suggest the need for further intervention based studies to establish the effect of breastfeeding education in university pediatric nursing curriculums & orientation programs in pediatric medical centers.

Study Limitations

- Convenience sample, only one specific hospital
- Power .70: Small sample size
- Marginal instrument internal consistency

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