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ABSTRACT

Mothers of premature infants who require intensive care begin their experience of parenthood in the unfamiliar and often overwhelming environment of the NICU, a rather stressful predicament they are not adequately prepared for. Being the primary members of the healthcare team directly involved in patient care, NICU nurses are in a unique position to help and support the parents, assess their needs and alleviate their stress so that they can adapt to their stressful situation and be able to carry on with their new role not as passive visitors in the unit but as active partners in patient care. In this regard, this study aimed to shed a deeper understanding of the relationship between these two main concepts - maternal stress and perceived nurse support. In addition to this, this study investigated on these two concepts as they exist in the context of cultural diversity: an important approach few researchers have ventured to explore on. The primary purpose of this study is to determine the maternal stress and perceived nurse support among mothers of premature infants admitted in a neonatal intensive care unit of a tertiary hospital in Doha, Qatar and to determine if a significant relationship between the said variables exist. In order to accomplish this, two pre-validated and widely used tools, the Parental Stress Scales: NICU (NPST) and Nurse Parent Support Tool (NPST) were utilized. Seventy-one (71) mothers, both Qatari (n = 25, 35%) and non-Qatari (n = 46, 65%), agreed to participate in this study and completed the three-part questionnaire which were distributed during the study period which lasted from March to May 2018. Data from the study shows that regardless of the nationality, most of the time it is not the medical fragility or the critical condition of the child.