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Streamlining the Nursing Approach to Newborns with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

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NEONATAL ABSTINENCE SYNDROME

Abstract

Newborns may suffer from withdrawal symptoms after exposure to maternal substance abuse while in-utero, resulting in negative outcomes for the patient, family, and healthcare system. Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) has increased by 300% in the United States. Non-pharmacological interventions such as rooming in, breastfeeding, and parent education are nursing activities which can improve the outcomes for NAS patients. However, a formal protocol to identify, assess, and treat the patients with non-pharmacologic evidence-based interventions is lacking. The purpose of this project was to develop, implement, and evaluate a sustainable policy to incorporate evidence-based strategies into nursing care at a rural community hospital. The results of this project demonstrate that changing, streamlining, and hard-wiring care for newborns experiencing withdrawal is essential.

Keywords: neonatal abstinence syndrome, non-pharmacological, and evidence-based practice