Baby Friendly Initiative: Examining the Relationship between Newborn Rooming-In and Increased Breastfeeding Percentages
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**Problem:** Evidence shows that breastfeeding is the most beneficial nutrition for newborns, so why at Texas Health Arlington Memorial Hospital, do breastfeeding percentages fall below the Healthy People 2010 goal of seventy-five percent in the immediate post partum period? Our unit partnership council, lactation consultants and divisional leadership examined literature suggesting that rooming-in increases breastfeeding percentages in the immediate post partum period.

**Evidence:** Breastfeeding percentages continue to fall below national goals suggesting that the practice of traditional open nursery care is not conducive to high breastfeeding rates. Our goal was to develop guidelines to encourage mothers to "room-in" with their newborns.

**Strategy:** After collection of baseline data and setting a goal of 80 percent of post partum mother's rooming-in with their newborns; staff education and a plan to pilot the change was developed. Patient education information was also developed to emphasize the advantages of rooming-in for both mother and newborn. A work-out session was conducted to develop strategies to decrease separation time during newborn recovery phase, increase interdepartmental collaboration and a new mother/newborn transfer process was developed.

**Implementation of Changes on Pilot Unit:** The change in practice began in April 2009 by placing educational signs in each patient room, educational booklets given to patient and verbal education from nursing staff to patients. We no longer offered an open nursery model, but encouraged rooming-in by presenting education and evidence to our patients regarding the correlation between rooming-in and breastfeeding. Additionally, mothers and newborns were transferred from Labor and Delivery to Mother/Baby together.

**Evaluations:** We conducted a Baby Friendly Mock Survey prior to implementation that revealed 50% of our mother were rooming-in 23 hours per day. A formal survey was conducted 6 months after implementation of change revealing a rooming-in rate of 83%.

**Results:** The increased rooming-in rate resulted in an increase in breastfeeding rates at discharge from 50 percent in April to 73 percent in October 2009.

**Recommendations:** Initial data reveals a positive relationship between increased rooming-in and increased breastfeeding percentages at the time of discharge, but additional follow-up phone calls are needed to further enhance these findings.

**Lessons Learned:** Our unit partnership council, using the Iowa Model, examined literature suggesting that rooming-in increases breastfeeding percentages in the immediate post partum period. Gaining the support and increasing the comfort level of staff nurses must be obtained.
before implementation of a practice that ultimately results in a change in culture. Patients and families are admitted to the hospital with their own mindset of how their plan of care will evolve and when these ideas do not match our practice, additional support is needed. This project revealed an increase in patient knowledge regarding rooming-in, bonding, and comfort level of both patient and nurse, resulting in an increased breastfeeding population.