The Tiny Babies Project: Evidence Based Care to Improve the Transition Home
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Problem & Evidence:
Premature babies admitted to neonatal intensive care (NICU) require complex healthcare at home and NICU discharge is associated with parent stress and anxiety. Health care providers, determining readiness for discharge must consider multiple factors. Effective, comprehensive discharge planning is a safe, cost effective strategy that leads to decreased parent anxiety, and increased parent satisfaction.

Strategy:
This quality improvement project was conducted in an 83-bed, level III NICU in Dallas County after institutional review board approval. The mixed methods project used qualitative and quantitative data from health care professionals and parents to inform a rapid cycle performance improvement process focused on improving discharge planning.

Practice Change:
Data on staff satisfaction with the discharge process were collected using a staff satisfaction tool designed for this project. Baseline data on parent anxiety and satisfaction were collected using two tools: Parent anxiety was measured using the Parent Stressor Scale: NICU (Miles, Funk, & Carlson, 1993), and parent satisfaction was measured using the How’s Your Baby Tool (Saunders, Abraham, Crosby, Thomas, & Edwards, 2003). Parent perceptions of discharge needs were collected using focus groups (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

Data were shared with the NICU professionals and the rapid cycle PI process used to design strategies. Three strategies were chosen and development, testing, and evaluation of these strategies is underway.

Evaluation:
Educational sessions were conducted and pre- and post-tests administered to evaluate knowledge and value surrounding the discharge process and the designed interventions.

Results of Educational Sessions:
Nursing staff showed a statistically significant increase in knowledge regarding parental anxiety and value of data-driven performance improvement. All other areas showed an increase in mean scores but failed to reach statistical significance.
**Recommendations & Lessons Learned:**
The use of mixed methods baseline data collection to better understand the needs of a particular population is an effective strategy. Data-driven performance improvement can change the knowledge, value, and climate of a unit.

**References:**
