

Correspondence: the importance of supplication for parents in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Hüseyin Çaksen

Division of Behavioral-Developmental Pediatrics, Department of Pediatrics, Necmettin Erbakan University, Meram Medical Faculty, Meram, Konya, Turkey

“NICU staff should support parents in the NICU for spiritual care, because it is the right of them. Health professionals should also be trained for spiritual support and care.”

Keywords

Parents, supplication, spirituality, NICU.

Corresponding author

Prof. Hüseyin Çaksen, MD, PhD, Division of Behavioral-Developmental Pediatrics, Department of Pediatrics, Necmettin Erbakan University, Meram Medical Faculty, 42080 Meram, Konya, Turkey; telephone: +90 332 223 66 84; facsimile: +90 332 223 61 81 and +90 332 223 61 82; ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8992-4386; e-mail address: huseyincaksen@hotmail.com.

How to cite

Çaksen H. Correspondence: the importance of supplication for parents in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. J Pediatr Neonat Individual Med. 2021;10(1):e100157. doi: 10.7363/100157.

Dear Editor,

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) often causes stress, anxiety and fear for parents during hospitalization of their infant. Religion and spirituality are important for many parents and to make the infant healthier and normal they pray God [1]. Supplication is the spirit of worship and results from sincere belief. For the person who makes supplication shows that there is someone who rules the whole universe, saying: “He knows the least significant things about me, can bring about my farthest aims; who sees every circumstance of mine, and hears my voice. He hears the voices of all beings, and He hears my voice too. He does all these things, so I await my smallest needs from Him too. I ask Him for them!” [2]. Herein, we present religious and spiritual aspect of parents in the NICU to increase the awareness of NICU staff regarding the importance of spiritual care for parents.

Catlin et al. [3] examined spiritual and religious components of patient care in the NICU. All participants observed spiritual and religious concerns of a family as having a place in patient care. Most (83%) participants reported praying for babies privately and the majority of participants felt God could prevent this [3]. Nimbalkar et al. [1] reported that prayer was an integral component of parents’ and relatives’ daily spiritual and religious ritual that was directed toward the admitted child’s rescue [1]. In the study of Brelsford and Doheny [4], parents with a religious or spiritual background reported their faith grew as a result of their experience in the NICU. Lloreda-Garcia [5] noted that most parents and professionals perceive religion and spirituality as playing a relevant role in neonatal care; however, about half (45%) of professionals prefer that parents do not express their religious or spiritual beliefs. In the NICU, actual use of prayer by parents was 55%; however, the staff’s estimation was 20% [5]. Sekhavatpour et al. [6] reported that spiritual self-care training can be used for mothers with premature infants in NICUs.

In our practice, we also observe markedly increase in frequency of supplication, daily religious rituals and charities in many parents after admission of an infant to the NICU. Parents who prayed for patience, strength, and/or the recovery of their infant found spiritual peace and relief when praying for Allah’s help. In 2015, a cooperation protocol was signed between the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Health to provide

“Spiritual Support and Guidance in Hospitals” in Turkey. Spiritual care is successfully continued to be given in many hospitals by educated clergymen in Turkey since that time [7]. Our hospital includes a clergyman (imam) and several prayer rooms for men and women open 24 hours. Patients, patients’ relatives, and hospital staff can worship and make supplication in prayer rooms whenever they want. People can learn the answers to their religious and spiritual questions and concerns from the imam. Moreover, there are several rooms in our NICU where hospitalized patients’ mothers reside, and mothers can personally worship, make supplication and read religious books in their rooms without going to a prayer room.

In conclusion, we strongly suggest that NICU staff should support parents in the NICU for spiritual care, because it is the right of them. Health professionals should also be trained for spiritual support and care.

Declaration of interest

The Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

References

1. Nimbalkar AS, Mungala BM, Khanna AK, Patil KH, Nimbalkar SM. Prayers and beliefs among relatives of children admitted in pediatrics wards. *J Family Med Prim Care*. 2019;8(3):1123-8.
2. Nursi BS. The first addendum to the twenty-fourth letter. From the Risale-i Nur Collection. The Letters [Internet]. Istanbul: Söz, 2012. Available at: <http://www.erisale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.202.350>, last access: January 2021.
3. Catlin EA, Guillemin JH, Thiel MM, Hammond S, Wang ML, O’Donnell J. Spiritual and religious components of patient care in the neonatal intensive care unit: sacred themes in a secular setting. *J Perinatol*. 2001;21(7):426-30.
4. Brelsford GM, Doheny KK. Religious and spiritual journeys: brief reflections from mothers and fathers in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). *Pastoral Psychol*. 2016;65(1):79-87.
5. Lloreda-Garcia JM. Religion, spirituality and folk medicine/superstition in a neonatal unit. *J Relig Health*. 2017;56(6):2276-84.
6. Sekhavatpour Z, Reyhani T, Heidarzade M, Moosavi SM, Mazlom SR, Dastoorpoor M, Karimollahi M, Khanjani N. The effect of spiritual self-care training on the quality of life of mothers of preterm infants: a randomized controlled trial. *J Relig Health*. 2020;59(2):714-24.
7. Demirtaş B. Diyanet işleri başkanlığının manevi danışmanlık ve rehberlik hizmetleri. Available at: <https://dergi.diyamet.gov.tr/makaledetay.php?ID=32018/>, date of publication: 2019, last access: January 2021.