

Food Insecurity Screening of Families in a Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Megan Ortiz BSN, RN and Katelyn Vawter BSN, RN, RNC-NIC

Faculty Adviser: Bobby Bellflower DNSc, NNP-BC, FAANP

College of Nursing - The University of Tennessee Health Science Center - Memphis, TN

Purpose

The aim of this DNP project was to assess if implementing a food insecurity (FI) screening tool in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) would be successful for screening families for FI.

Specific Aims

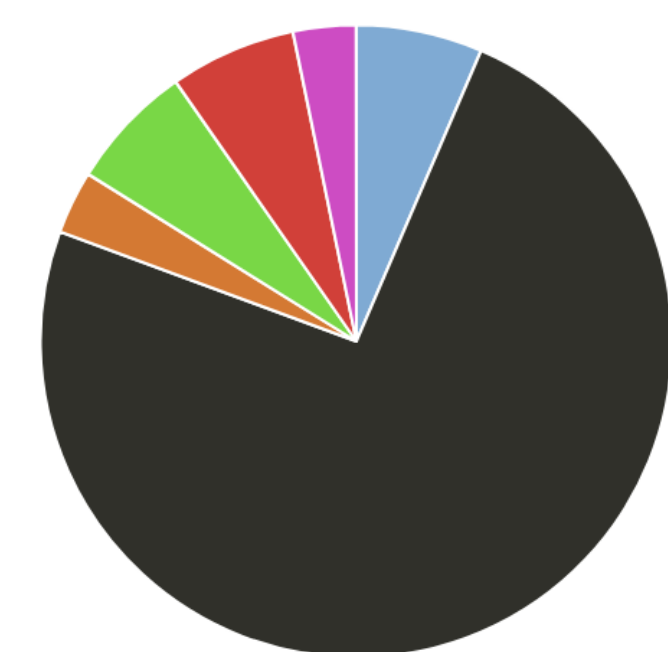
- Assess if FI is being screened through social work
- Determine if screening via FI screening tool is successful
- Provide descriptive data for demographic variables
- Determine if FI screening tool is successful at screening NICU families for FI

Background

NICUs are an often-overlooked area when it comes to screening for food insecurity (FI). Research has found that FI during early infancy is linked to poor health later in life, such as obesity, asthma, depression, and other chronic health conditions. FI in children has also been proven to be related to poor school performance and socio-emotional stability. By confirming familial FI at birth, children may be able to be screened at an earlier time for behavioral and developmental risks. Poverty screening, such as FI screening, can help to modify the path of the poverty-stricken families regularly seen in NICU settings.

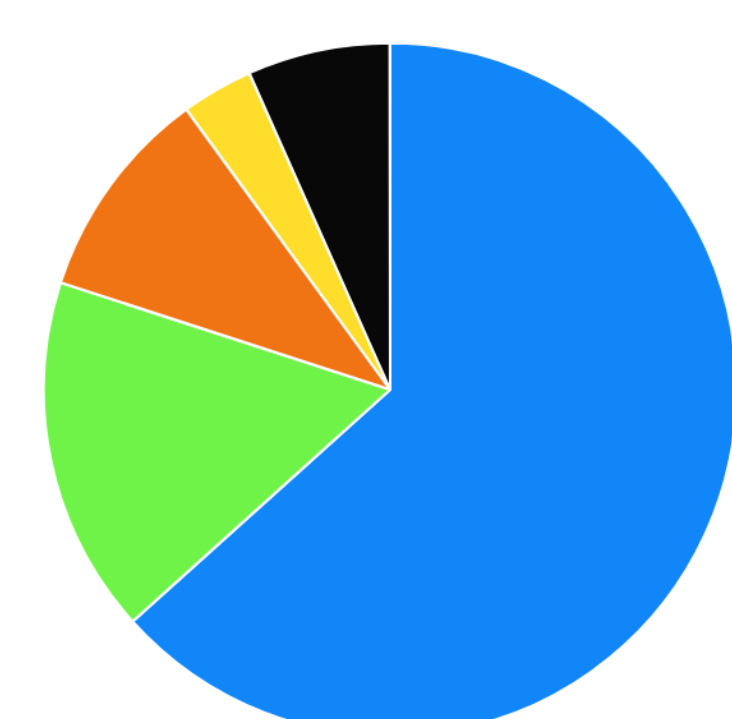
Randomized Chart Review

There was no explicit mention of Food Insecurity in the social work notes. However, 16% of the notes had some mention of services that work to improve food insecurity situations.



SW_Note_Mentioned_food_Insecurity

- No: mentioned WIC and Food Stamps
- No
- No, mentioned WIC
- No, mentioned Food Stamps
- No Note - Patient transferred
- No, Patient transferred



Race_Ethnicity

- AA
- W
- H
- Not mentioned
- Not available

61% of the randomized charts were from patients of African American race.

Methods

Study Design

Survey study with an initial randomized chart review

Setting

Level III NICU in an Urban Hospital located in Memphis, TN

Study Duration

November 2023 – December 2023

Study Population

Families with children admitted to the NICU

IRB

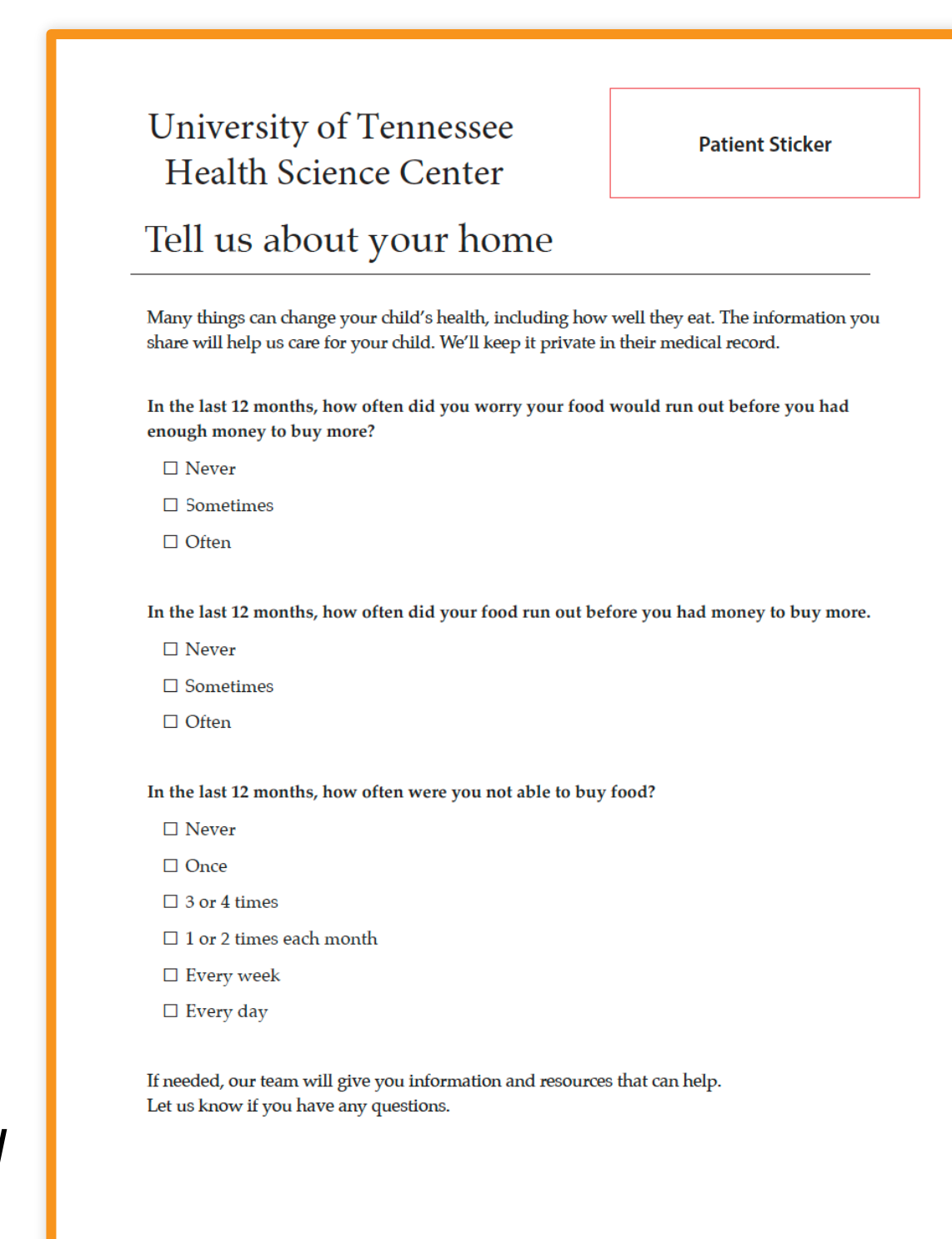
UTHSC Institutional Review Board has deemed the project as exempt.

Was FI Screened?

The team conducted a randomized chart review of social work notes for 30 NICU patients

3 Question FI-Screening Tool Survey

- 1 screening tool placed in every patient chart.
- Project leader educated nurses on the survey.
- Asked the parents to complete and turn in the survey



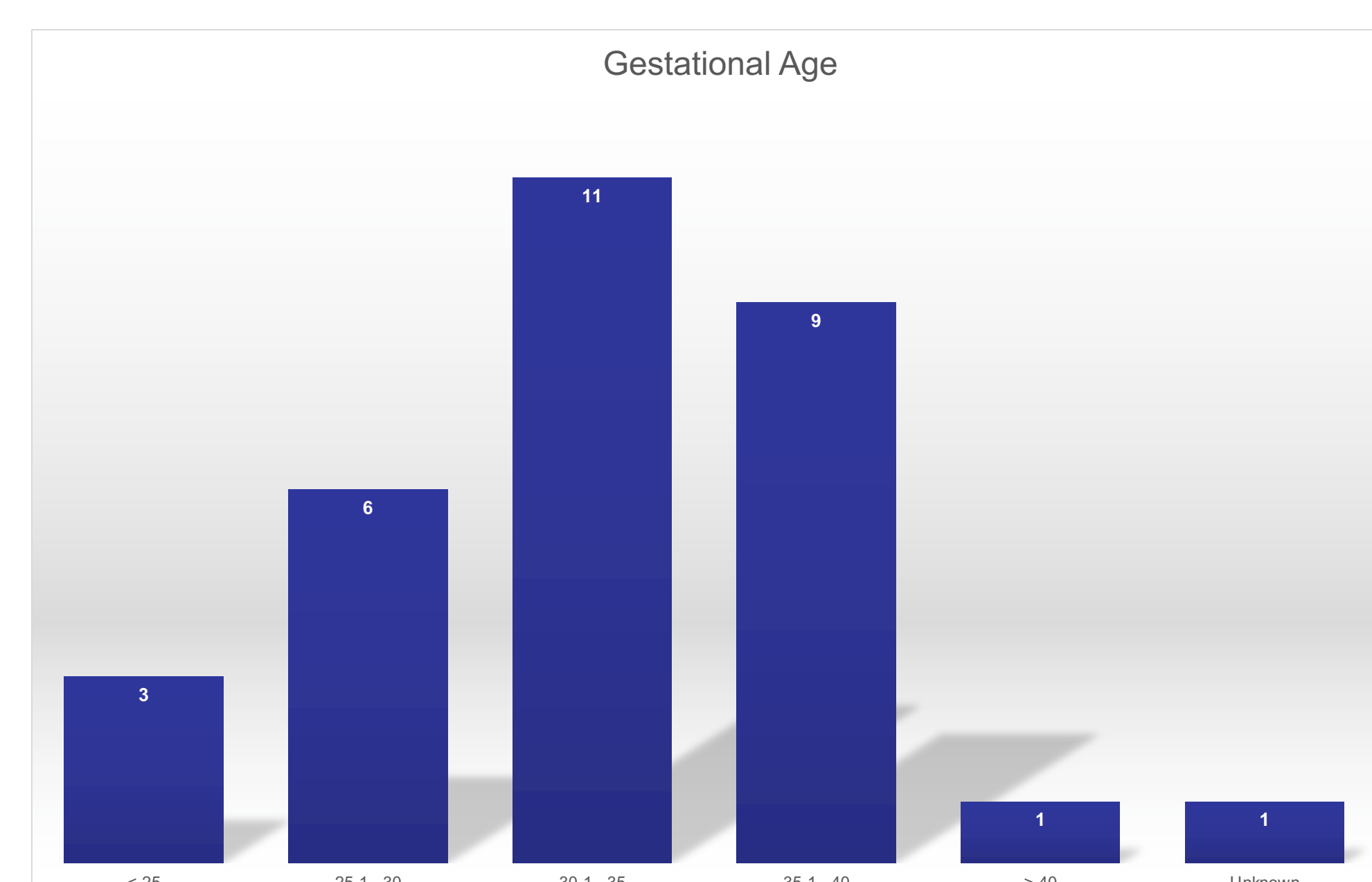
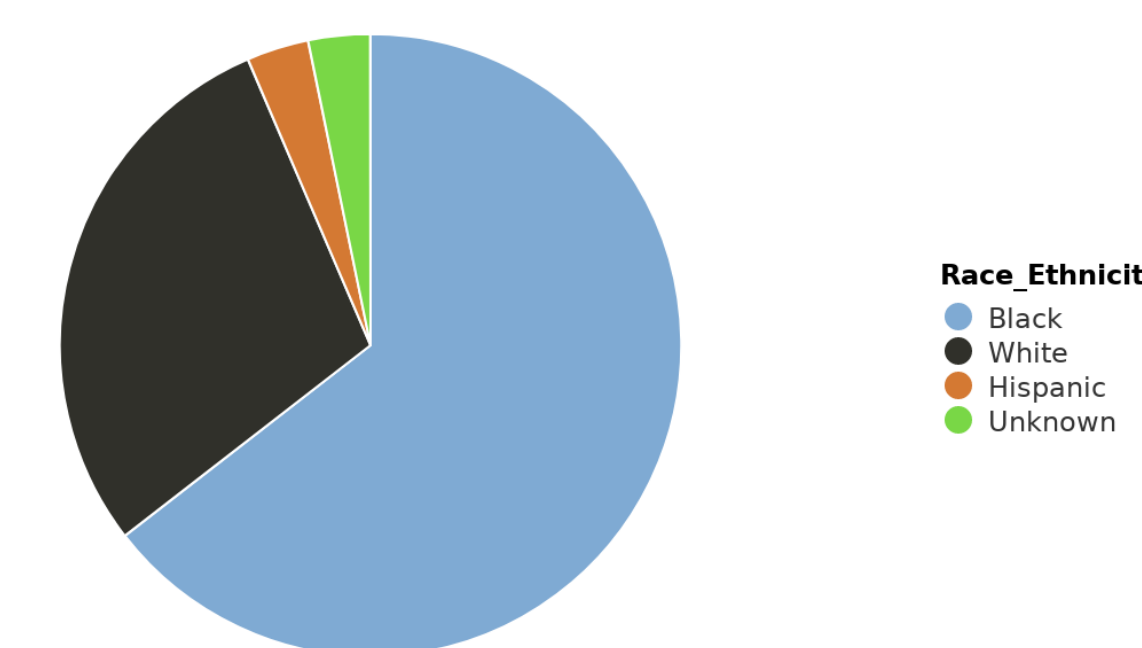
Inclusion Criteria

- Adults over 18 years of age
- English speaking only
- One survey per family

Three question Food-Insecurity Survey Tool

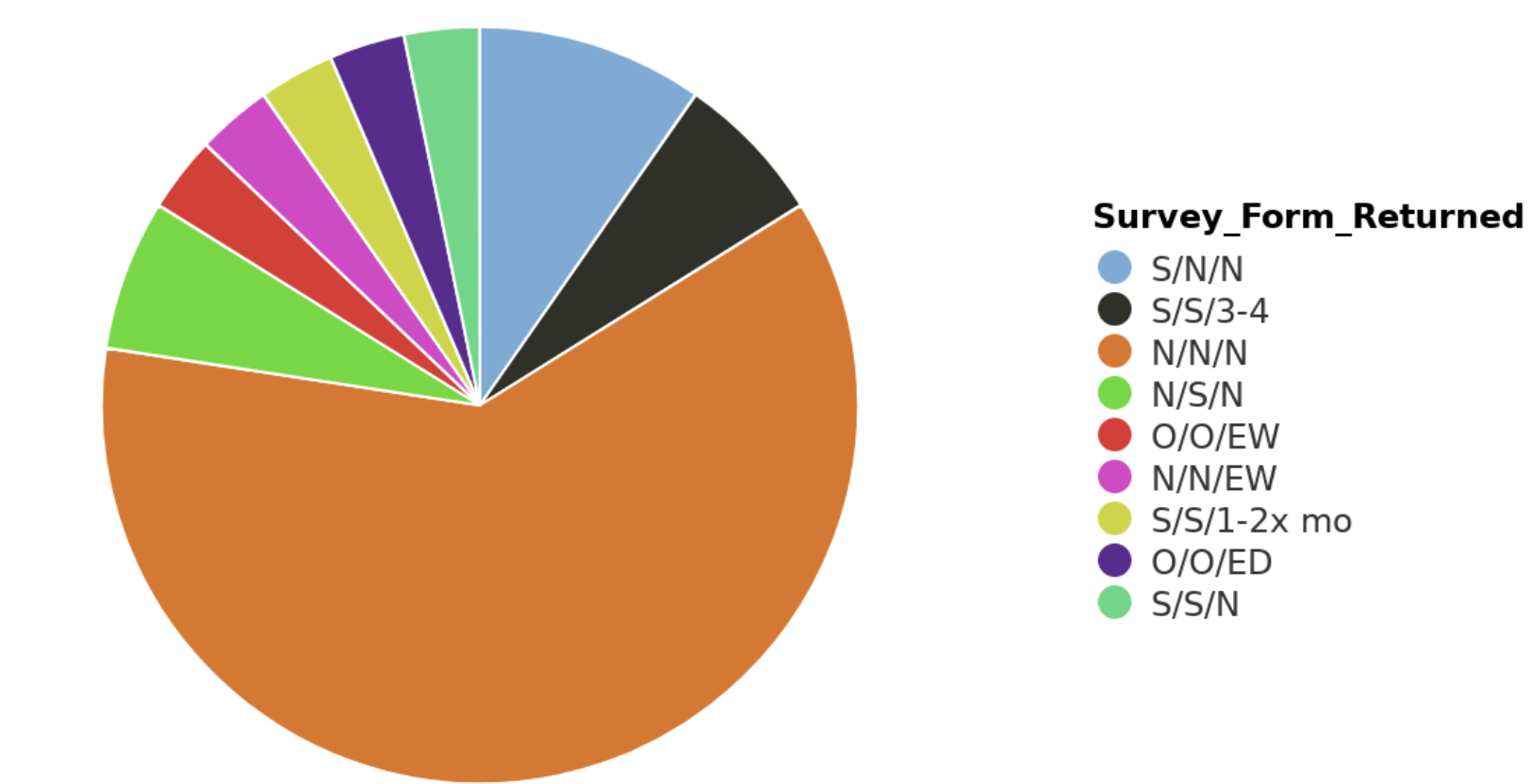
Results

64% of the returned surveys were from African American families. 29% of the returned surveys were from Caucasian families.



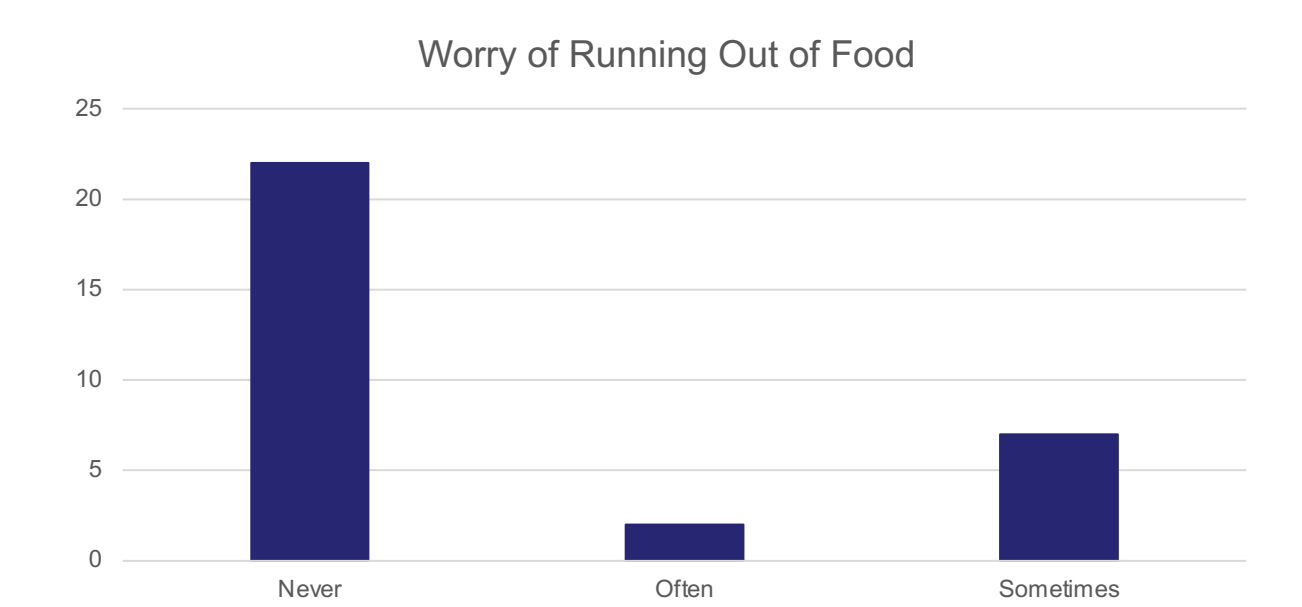
35% of the patients whose family's completed the FI survey were between 30.1 – 35 weeks gestation at birth.

Results

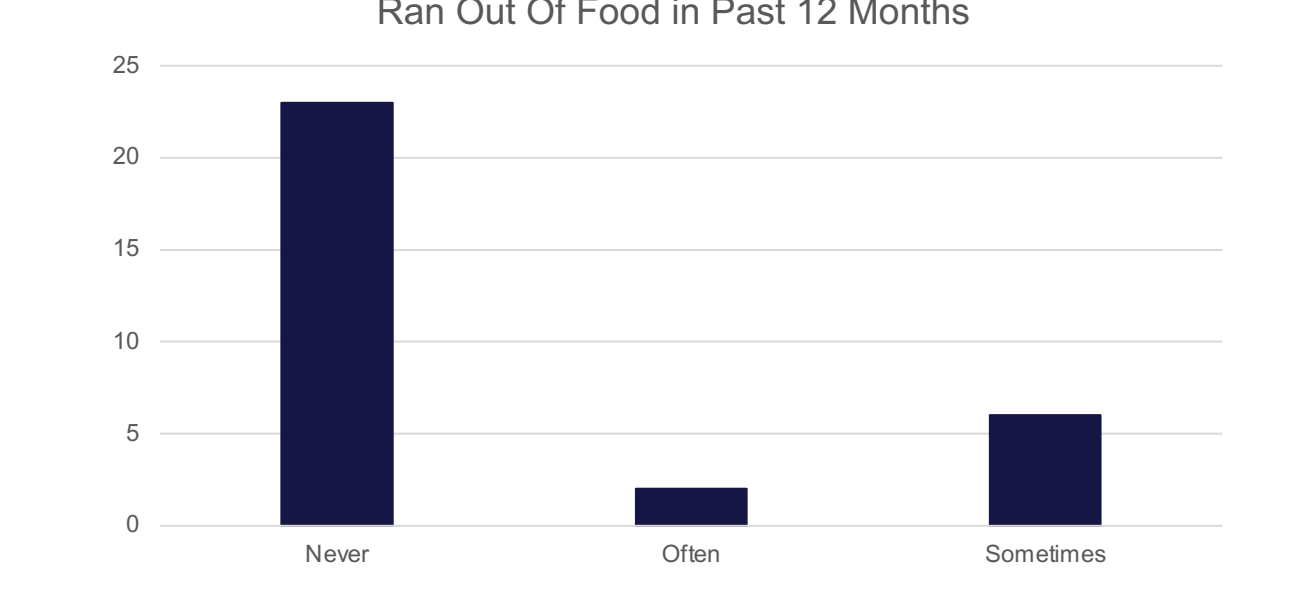


38.7% of families answered something other than "Never" to at least one of the 3 questions.

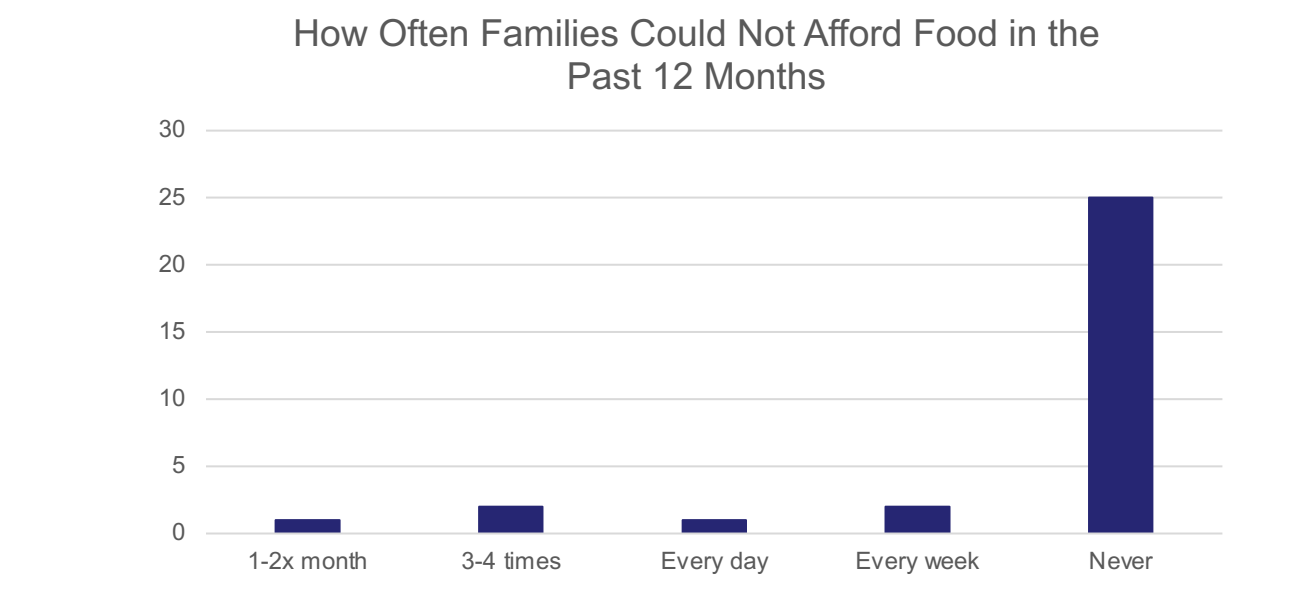
That is a total of 12 families.



29% families reported worrying about whether they would run out of food before they had money to purchase more (question 1).



25.8% families reported either sometimes or oftentimes running out of food before they had money to purchase more within the past 12 months (question 2).



19.3% families reported an inability to purchase food in some capacity within the past 12 months (question 3).

Implications for Practice

As the tool was successful in identifying families dealing with food insecurity, it is proven. However, further study for better distribution is needed.

Recognizing that the screening tool and distribution of the tool needs to be implemented based on the specific needs and best practice of each NICU.

Listen and adjust the implementation of the tool based on social work and staff feedback for the best way to employ and distribute the screening tool to ensure family comfort with answering honestly.

Work alongside social workers to provide a list of local resources to families experiencing food insecurity to better help them become food secure.

References

Scan QR Code for References

