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 health later in life, such as obesity, asthma, depression, and other chronic health conditions. Poverty screening, such as FI screening, can help to modify the path of the poverty-stricken families regularly seen in NICU settings.

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

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.

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.