Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
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Health Literacy of Parents of very Preterm Infants at NICU Admission and Discharge: A Prospective Cohort Study

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OBJECTIVE: To determine the prevalence of limited health literacy in parents of infants born ?32 and 0/7 weeks and if health literacy changes during hospitalization. STUDY DESIGN: Multi-site, prospective cohort study measuring health literacy using the Parent Health Literacy Activities Test, which estimates caregivers' ability to complete tasks such as reading prescription labels and preparing bottles. Data were analyzed using parametric and nonparametric comparison tests and multivariable regression to control for confounders. RESULT: Of the 137 participants, 31% missed ?3 questions of 8. Scores were not associated with admission characteristics or NICU complications. Lower scores were associated with lower nurses' (rho 0.20, p = 0.04) but not parents' (rho -0.12, p = 0.22) ratings of discharge readiness. Scores improved slightly from admission to discharge (p = 0.049). CONCLUSION: Many parents have difficulty answering questions related to basic infant care tasks. NICUs should ensure that communication and discharge planning are mindful of health literacy.

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Authors: Scott Lorch

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