The Determinants of Competent Parenting Among Thai Mothers in Providing Preterm Infants’ Home Environment

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The purpose of this study was to examine the determinants of Thai mothers’ ability to provide a supportive home environment for their preterm infants. The conceptual framework of the study was based on Belsky’s (1984) model of the determinants of parenting. The proposed determinants included maternal characteristics (education, parity, and self-efficacy in infant care), social-contextual factors (social support and employment status), and child characteristics (six dimensions of infant temperament including activity, rhythmicity, approach, adaptability, intensity, and mood). Data were collected at the well-baby clinics in three government hospitals and in the subjects’ homes, all of which were located in Bangkok, Thailand. The study sample consisted of 76 mothers and their preterm infants between 6 and 11 months corrected age. Competent parenting in providing a supportive home environment was operationalized using the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) Inventory. Self-efficacy in infant care, social support, and infant temperament were measured with the Maternal Efficacy Questionnaire, the Personal Resource Questionnaire 85 Part II, and the Revised Infant Temperament, respectively.

The findings did support that the maternal characteristics were the most important determinants of the quality of the home environment by explaining 21% of the variance in the total HOME score (p < .001). The sets of social-contextual factors and child characteristics did not significantly explain the variance in the total HOME score. The findings of this study provide important implications for nursing as well as directions for future study.