Factors Influencing Maternal Self-Efficacy In Preterm Infant Care

Author: Tassanee Prasopkittikun

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The quality of preterm infant care during the first year of life is the most important factor that will help the preterm infants catching up the full-term infants in terms of growth and development. The quality of preterm infant care depends on how the mothers perceive their self-efficacy in infant care. Thus, it is essential for pediatric nurses to know the factors influencing maternal self-efficacy in infant care. A secondary data analysis was conducted, using the available data set from Prasopkittikun’s (2002) study, to examine such factors. The study sample included 76 mothers and their preterm infants between 4 and 11 months corrected age. Data collection using interview was done at the subjects’ homes, all of which were located in Bangkok. Regression analysis using method “Test” revealed that only the set of child characteristics (including birthweight, length of hospital stay, difficult/easy child, and six dimensions of infant temperament) demonstrated the significant variance explained in the maternal self-efficacy in infant care ($R^2 = .21$, $p < .05$). The sets of maternal characteristics (including age, education, and parity) and social-contextual factors (including social support and maternal employment) did not significantly explain the variance in the maternal self-efficacy. When focusing on the effect of each of the study variables on the maternal self-efficacy while the others were statistically controlled, the strongest predictors were birthweight and length of hospital stay followed by difficult/easy child, social support, and rhythmicity, respectively. The study findings provide important implications for pediatric nurses to identify mothers who are at risk for having low self-efficacy in preterm infant care, and provide appropriate nursing interventions for enhancing maternal self-efficacy by educating mothers about infant temperament and allowing significant others to involve in the interventions.