

Thesis Title Parental Environmental Stress and
Stressors in Pediatric Intensive Care Units
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Abstract

This descriptive study was conducted to identify parental environmental stress and stressors and to compare environmental stressors and stress between the mothers and the fathers in PICU. Subjects consisted of twenty parents whose children were admitted to PICU at Beijing Children's Hospital and Peking Union Medical College Hospital in China. Environmental stressors were classified into seven dimensions: child's appearance, sights and sounds, procedures, staff communication, child's behaviors and emotion, behavior of professional staffs and parental role alteration. Structured interview method was used for data collection. Demographic

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data form and the Parental Stressor Scale: Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PSS:PICU) developed by Carter and Miles in 1983 was used.

The results of the study indicated that all subjects perceived 21 items out of 39 items as stressors. All items under parental role alteration dimension were perceived as stressors by all subjects. None of environmental factors defined in this study was perceived as nonstressor by all subjects, Parental role alteration, child's appearance, child's behavior and emotion were perceived by the subjects as extremely stressful with the mean score of 4.17, 3.98 and 3.70 respectively. Sudden sound of monitor alarms was rated as extremely stressful by 77.5% of subjects with mean score of 4.64. Subjects rated similar environmental stressors except for four items.

There were significant differences in parental environmental stress level between mothers and fathers on the dimensions of child's behavior and emotions staff communication, procedure behavior of professional staffs and child's appearance with the P value of .000, .000, .000, .000, and .001 respectively. Fathers had a significant higher mean scores of stress level than mothers.

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It is suggested that PICU is very stressful to all parents. Parental stress measurement and stressors identification should be performed.

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