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Drug user mothers, attitude of nurses and the quality of delivered care for newborns: Is there any relationship

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Purpose & Field of Study: Substance-abuse is an important health related issue for both mothers and infants in most of the countries and it has been received the attention of many researchers in recent years. The attitude of nurses toward drug user mothers may affect the quality of care and treatment of newborns' abstinence syndrome. The present study is aimed at investigating the relationship between the nurses' attitude toward the drug user mothers and their performance in taking care of their infants at Neonatal Intensive care Units (NICUs).

Methodology: In this descriptive-analytical research, the caring performance of 108 neonatal nurses have been observed and evaluated by The Nurse Caring Performance Checklist, then the attitude of the same nurses were assessed. The results were analyzed by using Statistical Tests like Kruskal-Wallis, Mann-Whitney and t-test.

Findings: Based on the data, the attitude toward drug-abuse in pregnancy was negative (94.4%) and the nurses' performance of caring for the infants suffering from neonatal abstinence syndrome was remarkably inappropriate (52.8%). However, no correlation was found between the caring performance factors and the attitude toward drug-abuse in pregnancy.

Conclusion: Inappropriate performance in taking care of newborns delivered from addicted mothers and negative attitude of nurses toward drug user mothers maybe the result of knowledge deficiency and dysfunction of Nursing Education System. In order to enhance the quality of care for these newborns, the subject of drug user mothers and newborn abstinence syndrome should be included into the nursing care curriculum. Moreover, training courses in this regard should be considered for all of the nurses who are planning to work in NICUs.

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