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Expanding Frontiers *of* Neonatology

Edited by

Elvidina Nabuco **Adamson-Macedo**

The time is consequently opportune for psychology to make an effective contribution to both the theory and care of the preterm neonate, viewed as a unique, emergent, coactional and hierarchical human being . . . The formal framework for this is Neonatal Health Psychology (NNHP), which is defined as 'the scientific study of biopsychosocial and behavioural processes in health, illness, and health care of the preterm (and fullterm) neonate during his/her first 28 days of life, and the relationship of such processes with later outcome.'



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As Neonatology has developed during the past decade, two of its features have assumed paramount importance. Firstly it is evident that Neonatology has rapidly acquired multidisciplinary connotations and secondly, progress has shown the importance of bringing together the knowledge and experiences of the medical profession, health professionals and psychologists, and mothers to improve the quality of physical and psychological care of the newborn; this is particularly true for hospitalised preterm neonates. The aim of this Special Issue of the Neuroendocrinology Letters is to present diverse experiences and related viewpoints involved in caring for both the newborn and their parents, within the multidisciplinary context of Neonatology.

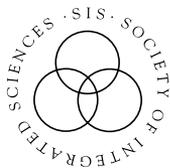
... Delivering care for the newborn, and particularly the preterm Neonate, is manifestly a matter of multidisciplinary skills and procedures, although hitherto this has not been appreciated as an entity; precise definition has not been forthcoming and, moreover, there has been a tendency to place greater emphasis on theory than on practice. Within the envelope of Neonatology, this 'Special Issue' is devoted to a record of the knowledge, contributions and experiences of an active group of Paediatricians, Nurses, Psychologists, Epidemiologists, Physiologists and Mothers themselves, the aim being to increase awareness of the many facets of care for the Neonate and in consequence, the boundaries of Neonatology as a discipline. The variety of these papers illustrates well the scope of Neonatology.



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Foreword

Expanding Frontiers of Neonatology

As Neonatology has developed during the past decade, two of its features have assumed paramount importance. Firstly it is evident that Neonatology has rapidly acquired multidisciplinary connotations and secondly, progress has shown the importance of bringing together the knowledge and experiences of the medical profession, health professionals and psychologists, and mothers to improve the quality of physical and psychological care of the newborn; this is particularly true for hospitalised preterm neonates. The aim of this Special Issue of the Neuroendocrinology Letters is to present diverse experiences and related viewpoints involved in caring for both the newborn and their parents, within the multidisciplinary context of Neonatology.

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Preface

by Elvidina Nabuco Adamson-Macedo

Delivering care for the newborn, and particularly the preterm Neonate, is manifestly a matter of multidisciplinary skills and procedures, although hitherto this has not been appreciated as an entity; precise definition has not been forthcoming and, moreover, there has been a tendency to place greater emphasis on theory than on practice. Within the envelope of Neonatology, this 'Special Issue' is devoted to a record of the knowledge, contributions and experiences of an active group of Paediatricians, Nurses, Psychologists, Epidemiologists, Physiologists and Mothers themselves, the aim being to increase awareness of the many facets of care for the Neonate and in consequence, the boundaries of Neonatology as a discipline. The variety of these articles illustrates well the scope of Neonatology.

Neonatal Health Psychology is an emergent sub-discipline within Health Psychology and was defined in 2000. Presently, a particular but not exclusive focus of attention is with the physical and psychological needs of hospitalised preterm Neonates, including the mental health/well-being of their parents; this work is presented here in 3 articles by Adamson-Macedo, Constantinou, and Barnes & Adamson-Macedo.

Throughout the world there is a marked increase in the incidence of babies born-too-soon, with the poorer regions tending to produce the worst cases. Bibby and Stewart write about the epidemiology of prematurity, with particular emphasis on the situation in the West Midlands region of the UK. Causes of prematurity are various, and Carson's article reflects upon detection and prevention of premature labour. Preterm babies are usually under distress and pain, and this Special Issue has a article by Boyle and McIntosh which discusses pain and compassion.

Mothers and caregivers remember vividly their experiences in Neonatal Units, and this is confirmed by three poignant examples recorded separately by Leung, Manns and Mills. Care given by specialist Neonatologists [paediatricians, nurses and psychologists] are separately recorded by Price, who recommends the need for a family centred approach. De Roiste demonstrates the beneficial effects of a sensory nurturing programme known as TAC-TIC (Touching And Caressing – Tender In Caring), a twenty-year old technique which requires the acquisition of a skill but has the advantage of not needing capital investment. Whilst Gomes reports a case study which concerns Sao Paolo, Thompson reflects upon the role

of counselling psychologists within a Neonatal unit. Del Priore, with Glasgow (Scotland) experience, discusses the need for attention to be paid to a policy of continuing psychological care after hospital discharge.

Those researchers and clinicians have recently been highlighting the possible links between early factors and later outcome. In this connection, Sandbrook and Adamson-Macedo report on their search for a new definition of ante-natal attachment. Bellingham-Young and Adamson-Macedo reflect upon the issue of prematurity relayed to adult minor illness.

Although this Special Issue is mainly dedicated to the baby born-too-soon and relationship to parents and caregivers, the promotion of physical and psychological health and well-being for the fullterm baby is also part of Health Psychology; thus two articles are included. One is by the paediatrician/neonatologist Correa and his associates and concerns the quality of routine care (bathing) of the newborn whilst in hospital; this team measured the emotions (physiological and behavioural measurements) of babies during two varieties of bathing, and consequently led to suggested changes in their hospital procedure. Adamson-Macedo and Barnes report on pioneer work which they have conducted on early cognitive abilities of healthy fullterm babies during the first 3 months of postnatal life.

All authors are thanked for their valuable contributions, which amply illustrate the eclectic character of Neonatology. My hope is that this is the beginning of a series of publications which actively encourage the development of integrated theories and practice of Neonatology for the promotion of both physical and psychological health and wellbeing of the newborn and their parents/caregivers.

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