Exploratory Study of NICU Parenting
Health Information
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Background
 Millions of Americans possess an inadequate level of health literacy (HL). HL is defined as the ability to access, understand, and use health information to promote optimal health. Parent HL impacts access, understanding and application of prescription labels, directions/dosage chart for over-the-counter medication (OTC), and ability to utilize information from a nutritional label. A percent correct will be computed and used in analysis.

Limitations
 Level of parent health literacy
 Average REALM Score
 Data
 Relationship between demographics and HL

Method
 Descriptive and cross sectional study of NICU parents with English as their first language.

IRB approval and informed consent were obtained.

Two instruments were used and analyzed as follows:

- REALM-R: validated tool to determine persons at risk for low literacy.
  - Participants are shown and asked to pronounce 10 health related words.
  - REALM-R scored per administration manual with a possible score from 0 to 10. A score of six or less indicates possible low HL.

- Author-developed parent health information survey including:
  - Demographic data.
  - How they actually obtain health information vs. how they prefer to obtain health information.
  - Perception of information received from provider.
  - Assessment of HL included evaluating understanding and application of prescription labels, directions/dosage chart for over-the-counter medication (OTC), and ability to utilize information from a nutritional label.
  - A percent correct will be computed and used in analysis.

Exploratory analysis was done to examine associations among HL and demographics.

Results

Parents most often received child health advice from family members (46%) and physicians (46%), but preferred to receive advice from physicians (77%) during well child visits (54%) or specific appointments (58%). (Graph 1)

Majority of parents preferred to receive health information during specific appointments (57.7%), well child visits (53.8%), or the Internet (30.8%). (Table 1)

Conclusions

- The REALM-R and survey are easily administered.
- Data can provide guidance to improve parental health education.
- Healthcare providers should not assume education or prior experience of parents is a predictor of health literacy.
- Limitations- small and primarily English speaking sample size in an institution where 31% of patients have limited English proficiency.