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Reducing Skin Injury and Breakdown in Neonatal Patients

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Abstract

The integumentary system is known for being the body's largest organ, comprised of water, fats, protein, and minerals, for which composition plays a significant role in protecting the body against thermal, chemical, and microbial agents. However, the skin's functionality is reduced in neonates as the stratum corneum is thin at birth due to diminished water-holding capacity (Oranges et al., 2015). The skin's fragility is further stressed among preterm neonates and newborns in neonatal intensive-care units (NICU) due to medical status, procedures, and exposure to skin irritants (Visscher et al., 2009). Reduction in skin injury and breakdown in NICU patients is vital to limit infection risk and promote skin integrity. The purpose of this research is to determine the effects of implementing protective skin measures to limit skin injury and breakdown. Data collection will happen through systemic surveys and assessments of NICU patients to measure skin injury. The neonatal skin risk assessment scale (NSRA) is the intended tool for data collection. Conclusions will include specific issues and connections regarding key concerns for developing skin injuries and breakdown, such as medical condition, gestational age, weight, and surgical/procedural needs. Education, nursing assessment, care, and interventions are the desired implementation to reduce the risk of skin injuries in neonate patients. The goal of this proposed evidenced-based practice project is to evaluate and determine best practices in eliminating and reducing skin breakdown