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Circle by Providence: Supporting Discharge Readiness for Postpartum Mothers

Lisa Fellin BSN, RNC, Beth Yanamura ADN, RNC

Background

Postpartum women receive an abundance of information yet often feel they know very little about how to manage the day-to-day needs of life with a newborn. 1

Recent studies indicate that using technology to support discharge teaching is one way to help patients manage the “information overload” and better cope when they are home. 2

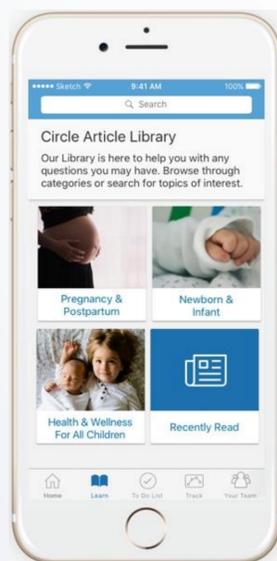
Studies show that women increasingly use the Internet to find social support and information on self care and infant care. This information-seeking changes between pregnancy and postpartum, from long periods of online searching during pregnancy to short, fragmented bursts of searching after the birth of a child. Smartphones are one of the main points of access to the Internet for many women. 1

Hospital stays are typically brief, 1-3 days on the Mother Baby Unit (MBU), a 30 bed unit at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center (PSVMC) where 4000 babies are delivered annually. Parents are often exhausted from labor and delivery, and reviewing postpartum information and handouts often takes a back burner to the round-the-clock demands of a new baby.

A survey of 50 MBU postpartum mothers at PSVMC indicated that at least 30% acknowledged they were not able to review their discharge folder of mother and infant care during their hospitalization.

Nurses have a significant role in providing optimal discharge care, but there are challenges to achieving this goal, including short length of hospital stay. 2

It’s vital for nurses to draw on other resources to enhance discharge readiness, to provide excellent and reliable patient education to equip mothers to be confident and competent in their self and infant care skills. 3



Purpose

This project used evidence-based practice to introduce a mobile application (app) to improve self-reported discharge readiness for postpartum mothers on MBU at PSVMC, compared with current educational tools, video and handouts, at time of discharge.

This recently developed app, Circle by Providence, is available free to mothers and mothers-to-be.

Methods

The target population included postpartum mothers on the Mother Baby Unit. During the baseline, mothers were surveyed at discharge during April 2018. They were asked a series of questions: satisfaction with the current video and discharge folder, preferred method of learning, and discharge readiness, using a 1-5 scale anchored by 1=not ready and 5=very ready.

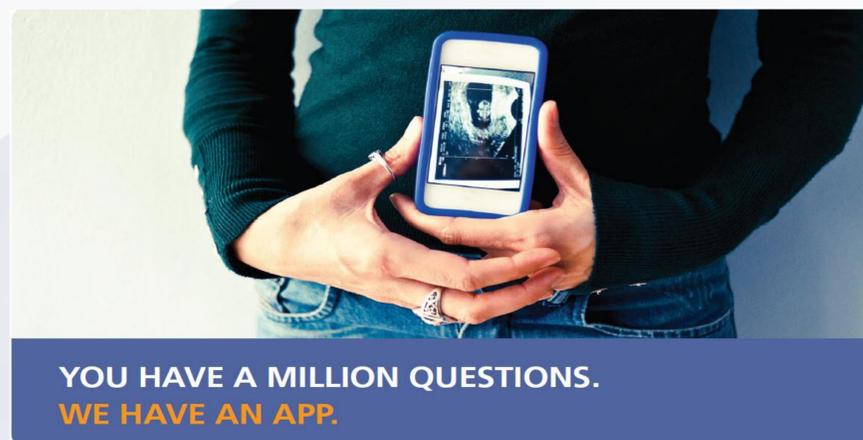
Baseline results revealed that 26% (13) of MBU mothers did not feel fully prepared for discharge, lacking knowledge to care for themselves; 43% (21) of MBU mothers felt they were lacking knowledge to care for their baby.

The Circle App addresses many of these deficiencies but had not previously been incorporated in discharge education on MBU at PSVMC. Circle by Providence App offers:

- Articles about pregnancy, babies and parenting
- Breastfeeding support
- Information about classes and groups for new moms
- A to-do checklist from Providence experts to guide every stage of pregnancy and motherhood
- Health-tracking tools

The project intervention included introducing the Circle App to MBU mothers during a trial period. MBU nurses introduced the App with a “Take 5” technique: Each nurse taking 5 minutes per patient to review 5 important aspects of the App with at least 5 patients during April/May 2018.

After introduction to the Circle App, mothers were surveyed during April/May 2018. They were asked a similar series of questions: satisfaction with the current video, preferred method of learning, discharge readiness using the same 1-5 scale, and additionally, their satisfaction with the Circle App. Statistical comparisons between baseline and post-intervention were compared using chi-square tests.



Results

During the baseline, 50 MBU mothers were surveyed. Of these, 98% viewed the discharge videos and 70% reviewed the discharge folder.

Sixty-three MBU mothers were introduced to the Circle App and 45 (71%) surveys were completed. Of mothers who completed the survey, 98% viewed the discharge videos and 71% downloaded the Circle by Providence App.

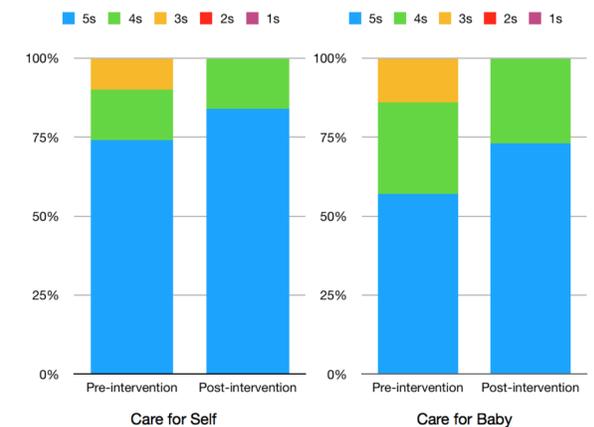
Discharge education with the Circle App resulted in 38% improvement % of mothers feeling “very ready for discharge” in care for themselves (p=.09), and 37% improvement in discharge readiness in care for their baby (p=.028).

All (100%) of mothers who downloaded the Circle App felt it would be useful for their postpartum needs.

Comments from the App surveys:

- “Really easy to look up information”
- “The App is really great! Love being able to access information and track feedings and diapers all in one place”
- “I really like the appointment reminder”
- “I love to learn from apps. I work in the tech industry and use apps all the time”
- “We would absolutely use the Circle App”

% of Participants: Scale 1-5, how ready do you feel for discharge?



Discussion/Conclusions

This study showed that the Circle App by Providence was well accepted and demonstrated to be a useful resource in meeting educational needs for postpartum mothers. The introduction of the App significantly raised discharge readiness in MBU mothers to care for their baby and reached borderline significance at raising discharge readiness for themselves.

It is recommended that the Circle by Providence App will be incorporated into discharge education for postpartum mothers on MBU at PSVMC. Smartphones are a nearly universal resource, and the Circle by Providence App is reliable, comprehensive, current, and evidence-based.

Future considerations might include incorporating non-English languages on the Circle App. At present, discharge handouts and folders will remain available in situations where a smartphone is not accessible.

References

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