**STRUGGLING TO GET CONNECTED:**
How Nurses can Support Mother-Infant Attachment in the Neonatal/Intensive Care Unit.

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**BACKGROUND:**
Attachment is the formation of a relationship between a mother and her infant through a process of physical and emotional interactions. Hospitalisation can interrupt the mother-infant relationship and their ability to bond reciprocally. Nurses play a vital role in supporting interactions between the mother and infant within the neonatal/intensive care unit.

**AIM:**
Fifteen primary research articles were reviewed to explore the mother-infant dyad within the neonatal/intensive care unit and identify ways the nurse can support the mother-infant attachment process.

**FINDINGS:**
Two major themes and five sub-themes emerged on how nurses can support mother-infant attachment (See Figure 1):

1) **Mother-Infant Interaction:**
   - Kangaroo Care (KC): Placing the infant (term or preterm) naked or in a nappy, prone and upright onto the bare chest of the mother to promote closeness.
   - Breastfeeding: Provides the mother a feeling of closeness and contribution to care.
   - Participation In Routine Care: Mothers participation in routine care enhances their maternal role, feeling of inclusion and confidence.

2) **Nurse-Mother Interaction:**
   - Psychosocial Support: Nurses who support mothers individually according to their emotional, social and psychological needs allow for trustful relationships. This alleviates anxiety for mothers enhancing confidence when interacting with their baby.
   - Communication: Nurses who interact, share observations, are good listeners, able to positively apply their authority and 'engage' with mothers, facilitate a positive relationship that enhance their confidence when interacting with their baby.

**CONCLUSION:**
Nurses working in neonatal/intensive care units need to construct nursing care towards the mother-infant dyad, with roles and responsibilities that incorporate mother-infant and mother-nurse relationships in support of the mother-infant attachment process.

**REFERENCES:**