

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES FROM A SWEDISH HORIZON OF STUDIES USING NEW
TECHNOLOGY FOR PARENTAL SUPPORT

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Objectives: To describe experience of using information and communication technology (ICT) to support parents during the initial period of the child's life.

Methods: An intervention using ICT as a medium between parents and staff were planned and implemented in close collaboration with staff at the involved settings. Electronic encounters in the parent's home between mothers and an experienced child health nurse, fathers and an experienced male counsellor and videoconferencing between new parents at home and midwives at a maternity department were used.

Five mothers with normal pregnancy and healthy children and four fathers to these children and nine couples/new parents discharged early from the maternity ward participated. Ethical considerations were of great importance throughout the whole research process including a 12 month intervention period. Narrative interviews were conducted, transcribed, analyzed using a qualitative thematic content analysis.

Results: The studies revealed that both mothers and fathers found it most valuable to meet each others in parental groups during the child's first year via electronic encounters. Parents experienced videoconferencing as valuable and functional and made them feel confident being discharged early after childbirth.

Conclusions: The use of ICT creates an opportunity for parents to share experiences of being parent and seems to facilitate everyday life. Questions still need to be answered to find the optimal way to implement ICT in ways that provide long lasting positive consequences for parents, staff and organization.

Key Words: Electronic encounters, videoconference, intervention, Parental support, content analysis, ICT, nursing