

## **E-HEALTH- A TOOL FOR PROVIDING SUPPORT TO FAMILIES WITH PREMATURELY BORN INFANTS**

Birgitta Lindberg, Division of Nursing, Department of Health Science, Luleå University of Technology, SE-97187 Luleå, Sweden. Phone: +46 920 493856, Fax: +46 920 493850  
E-mail: birgitta.lindberg@ltu.se

**Background:** Parents of infants born prematurely have to face many stressors and when it is time for taking their infant home, new demands and increased parental responsibility are created.

**Objectives:** To describe if real-time videoconferencing can be used for providing support to parents of preterm born infant after the families' homecoming. Introduction of videoconferencing was considered being important to follow from both parents' and certified paediatric nurses' perspectives.

**Methods:** Narrative interviews were conducted with nine couples of parents with an infant born preterm and ten paediatric nurses. A qualitative thematic content analysis was used to describe the manifest and latent content of the text. Separate analyses were made from the perspective of parents and of nurses, but the result is presented jointly.

**Results:** Using videoconferencing provided increased security. The importance was to have the access but less important was how often it was used. It was almost like a meeting in reality, allowing face-to-face supportive meetings. The significance of communication with body language was stated. Other benefits were that both parents and staff could be involved in the conversation. The use of videoconferencing was a tool to assess the situation. Technology was experienced as user-friendly, but when technical problems occurred meetings were less fruitful. The technology opens up other opportunities for use, for example, establish contact with child health services. Changes need to take time, although they were convinced that this technology must be a part of the upcoming care.

**Conclusions:** Videoconferencing is one among other possible ways to support parents after returning home with their preterm infant.