

Effectiveness of the Bundle Care to Relieve the Thirst for Intensive Care Unit Patients: Meta-Analysis

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Abstract : Objective: Thirst discomfort is the most common yet often overlooked symptom in patients in the intensive care unit (ICU), with an incidence rate of 69.8%. If not properly cared for, it can easily lead to irritability, affect sleep quality, and increase the incidence of delirium, thereby extending the length of hospital stay. Research points out that the sensation of coldness is an effective strategy to alleviate thirst. Using a combined care approach for thirst can prolong the sensation of coldness in the mouth and reduce thirst discomfort. Therefore, it needs to be further analyzed and its effectiveness reviewed. Methods: This study uses systematic literature review and meta-analysis methodologies and searched databases including PubMed, MEDLINE, EMBASE, Cochrane, CINAHL, and two Chinese databases (CEPS and CJTD) based on keywords. JBI was used to appraise the quality of the literature. RevMen 5.4 software package was used, and Fix Effect Model was applied for data analysis. We selected experimental articles, including those in English and Chinese, that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Three research articles were included in total, with a sample size of 416 people. Two were randomized controlled trials, and one was a quasi-experimental design. Results: The results show that the combined care for thirst, which includes ice water spray or oral swab wipes, menthol mouthwash, and lip balm, can significantly relieve thirst intensity MD=-1.36 (3 studies, 95% CI (-1.77, -0.95), $p < 0.001$) and thirst distress MD=-0.71 (2 studies, 95% CI (-1.32, -0.10), $p = 0.02$). Therefore, it is recommended that medical staff identify high-risk groups for thirst early on. Implications for Practice: For patients who cannot eat orally, providing combined care for thirst can increase oral comfort and improve the quality of care.

Keywords : thirst bundle care, intensive care units, meta-analysis, ice water spray, menthol

Conference Title : ICN 2024 : International Conference on Nursing

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : October 03-04, 2024