

## ANNEXURE G

### TRANSCRIPT OF NURSES

#### Interview 1

Time : 19:55 02/02/2023 @ steve biko duration 06:51

Researcher: ammm

Research : good eveng Sr, how are you.

NP:fine thanks and you

Researcher : thank you for volunteering and allowing me to come and see you, so I am doing a research study about challenges nurses faced during covid-19 in facilitating bonding and attachment. Meaning you were unable to facilitate bonding and attachment with mother for a period of time. For example mother who tested positive were unable to KMC because we did not know what was the outcome after that and also mothers that were coming outside because we did not know if they + or -. we also not allowing mothers to remove their mask so that the babies could see their faces and all, so yaa . the research is about us to find ways or strategies to come up with more ahh I can say ideas or strategies that can help us in the long run if we can have something which is similar like covid-19 that can affect bonding and attachment. Ayy. So they will be few questions that I will be asking but the main question is about what are the challenges faced by nurses and parents to facilitate parent -infant bonding. According to you what are the challenges you had when trying to facilitate bonding?

Np1: personally the challenges that I had was the one if the mom is positive there was no bonding at all and another one was if she is transferred from a unit and we don't know the results then that mother can't come without results. This is what I saw that these two are eeeeh in the way of me as a nurse to enhance bonding in between the mom and the baby, as we know bonding goes a long way very important part of the baby's development.

Researcher :For the points that you already matched, what do you think we can do or what could have been done to prevent maybe for mothers that are coming from outside and unable to see their baby because they were no covid test done, what do you think could have been done at that point?

Np01: I think personally, especially in the issue of bonding because it is so key to the baby's development psychologically and all, is that every mom who is admitted and being pregnant, I know it could be expensive but it should be in such a way that all of them are tested so that we know for sure that this mom is positive or not, which will make it quicker for mom, when they admitted them as pregnant in labour or about to deliver they should test them before they could deliver. So that part cannot be interrupted of bonding.

Researcher: thank you, I'm just going to ask you three questions the other one is yes or no with a supporting answer neh. The first one is do you think it is important for parents not to be separated from their babies in NICU?

NP01: to me it is important because this baby was in utero attached to the mother with an umbilical cord .....and then if you separate them... through birth after that ,we know after delivery the baby we must put on the chest of the mom, that is the first step of bonding after separation of the cord,

for me is yes is very very import to keep that bond there continuously , even thou we know we cannot do it continually but we should not break it all together

Researcher we should continue with continuity

Npo1:yes

Researcher: do you think parents with infant in the NICU were considered when applying Covid-19 rules regulation?

Nop01 : shooo I remember... no, my answer is no, they were never considered ... understanding the global pandemic the way it was, they were set aside anything had to do with bonding was not even considered, understanding the the the consequences of the contracting covid so they were never considered.

Researcher: What do you think are the activities we can do with covid in the picture that can ensure bonding ?

Np01 : as a nurse ,a neonatal nurse I think to facilitate eee bonding as I said, mom whom we know are negative should allow them when they come in not to put on mask to expose their faces to their babies, only to their baby. We know how the distance how it travels and all those molecules of covid-19 so for the baby we allow the mom to open their face to be able to bond with their babies that will also help.

Researcher: okay. In your view what do you think we can do or can be done to facilitate bong and attachment?

NPO1: as i matched in the previous question is that we should ensure mom who come to deliver we sure of their results so that we don't temper with the bonding session so it can continue from birth until mom is discharged.

Researcher : thank you very much sr phage I think all question were answered aaaahm, I am not gonna ask other questions because when you were answering the are quetiin which you answered , points you were saying , so I can not repeat same question like now the questiins are similar. Thank you for giving me you time.

Npo1; I'm glad and I am hope you make it with your studies

Researcher : thank you very much( smile)

## Interview 2

25 feb 09:55

Researcher: thank you sister for giving me time and allowing us to do the interview.

reThe main Question is what are the challenged faced by nurses and parents to facilitated parent-infant bonding and attachement in the neonatal ICU during covid-19 pandemic. So they will be few question that I will ask you following up on the main question neh.

Researcher: tell me what do you think were the challenge that prevented bonding and attachment in the neonatal ICU during covid-19?

NP2 : Aaah OK thatnk you for doing this interview with me , well one of the challenges was we could not allow mother to come to lodge as we used to do before covid-19 .so during covid1-19 they were not allowed to lodge which was one of the challenge cause now the mothers and babies were separated which was not good for the recovery of the baby.

.....Np02 throat clearing....

Researcher : so tell me what do you think could have been done to facilitated bonding and attachemnt in the neonatal ICU?

Np01: aaah I think because there was a backlog with the covid -19 result testing , maybe they could have been a rapid testing for mothers if she delivers today we could have tested her then when the results a negative she could have gone straight for lodger, so that was going to be easy since she is in the lodger facility we were sure that she was not going contact covid unless it was otherwise, but if ...the mother was around, she was going to be frequenting in our unit, because we could have known that she is covid negative. So think that was going to work even for the babies.

Researcher : do you think is important for parents not to be separated from their babies ?

Npo2: it is very important, as a mother child friendly hospital we believe that the mother should never be separated from her child unless she is very ill or what, but because of covid-19 they were separated which I don't believe is good for the baby from the first place that why I talked about rapid testing, if we could have sticked to rapid testing them they were going to be around they baby

Researcher: do you think parents with infant in the neonatal ICU were considered when applying covid -19 rules ?

Nnp02 : no no no they were totally not considered ,because if they considerate , we should have thought about may a mother being around full time if is not the whole family, ahhh they were not consureded really they were not.

Researcher: what are the activity we could have done to allow parents to bond with the babies?

Np02: like I said before rapid testing was one of things , I think it was gone solve most of our problems during covid -19 because if the mother was rapid tested got the results sometime then we decided if we still have space at the lodge facility then mother straight away she goes to lodger then she was gone give us milk ever now and then , even with her the stress level will go down , ok I see my baby now and then , I think that was going to help. And again when the mother is around she was going to do KMC every now and then unless maybe is contraindicated because to babys conditions but if it wasn't for that, the baby was going to bond with the mother by doing KMC because were going to allow her maybe for 45 minutes after feeding to do KMC with her child ever now and then, when she comes.

Researcher: thank you sr , they are two last questions that we need to answer then we come to the end of our interview.

Researcher: tell me how did covid-19 restriction make you feel?

Np02: to me it made me feel distressed, because you are caring for this baby , we never saw the mother it was a c/section then the mother is discharged home after she was tested and she comes back after 5 days , because there was a backlog with covid-19 results, so for mw it was like ....there is this gap that we creating between the mother and the child which was not good so it always make me feel distress to say we not doing good for this baby and the mother.

Researcher: do you think we could have put more visiting allowed for parents?

Np02: ya but it goes back to rapid testing, if maybe even for the father we were going to test him maybe once to allow him only for that day to allow him to see his child, it was going to be better because for somebody who has seen the child and somebody who has a imaginary picture of how is the baby he will support the mother better if he has seen the child, now you know what is going on there than to someone who has never seen the child, so I feel like if we have given the father a chance by rapid testing him maybe of a day maybe once in two weeks to come and see the baby for that day nit was going to be much better for the three of them, the baby mother and father.

Researcher: thank you sister makhado for allowing this interview we come to the end of our interview

Np02: you are welcome, thank you.

### Interview 3

5 feb 2023 08:22

Researcher : good morning sister how are you

Np03; iam fine and you

Researcher ; im good.

Researcher: aaaam thank you for volunteering to be part of my research study, so the main question that we had is that, what are the challenges faced by nurses and parents to facilitated parent infant bonding in the neonatal ICU during covid-19 pandemic,

Researcher: so according to your view, what is it that we can do or any action that we can do that will make it easy for the parents and baby to bond at the time of the covid-19?

Np3 so we can start? Can I start.

Researcher : yes, you can say anything, you can start, I will record only the nonverbal.

Np03: okay so during the pandemic it was a new thing so we were not prepared for it. So we started by doing things then we were changing as time goes on. like at first it like a shutdown, the country shit down but delivering of babies continued so we had to nurse those babies during the pandemic so as parents were not allowed to be ..... they were not allowed to stay at the hospital, though we had a lodger the lodger was closed when the covid pandemic started like 1<sup>st</sup> of April. was it April, ya from april the lodger was closed as a results ya as the results, it was very challenges because sometimes like when the child is critical you need the parents near by so parents see that you trying everything because sometimes when the parent is not here and you just call or sometime you would call and you don't get the parents when the child.. when you really really need to talk to the parents because were unreachable physically so, we can only communicate with then.

Researcher: so tell me what is it that we should have done to facilitated or make it easy to facilitated bonding and attachment?

Np03: I think testing of mothers, timely testing like ... I don't know if it could have worked but timely testing like before coming into the delivery room, testing them before hand but it was difficult because sometime they just come when they are.... Just at the eager of delivery but there is nothing we could have done soooo..... is difficult (smiling )

Researcher: ok. Do you think is important that parents are not separated from their babies ant tell me why?

Np03: it is because sometimes separating a mom from a child you are distressing mom and bonding is like compromised because a sick especially a sick neonate it needs a mom there because sometime mom and baby they bond during pregnancy , like the talk and now the bay is born with difficulties they bond is terminated is like we terminated the bond and we stressing mom because the child is sick and now the child is left alone with the nurses.like.....

Researcher: do you think parents with neonate in the neonatal ICU were considered when doing covid-19 rules?

Np03: no they were not

Researcher : tell me what you think they should have done?

Np03: I think parents , firstly they should have ...what is the word to use.. they should have been excluded from the covid roll call, because we were they same , they were a circular that everyone must go covid 2 and work there but if you had a neonate at home or a few months old child can you imagen , going there and exposing yourself , then going home to breastfeed and the fear in you , everyone was afraid during covid. the fear in you and the fear of giving covid to the child like.....

Researcher: and do you think ammm, the application to neonatal ICU as the whole, did they consider the neonatal ICU when they we making covid -19 rule or the were making it general?

Np03: it was just general ,it was just general because there were no specific protocol for the neonate unit was the whole hospital protocol.

Researcher: okay as a nurse what do you think are the activity that we can ensure bonding is not broken if covid-19 may return or similar pandemic ?

Np03: okay like for now, we have logder parents are testing and even in the covid unit they have ,after some months they have a unit were they keep they mom and babies together.when the mom test positive the allow the baby to stay with the baby as long as the baby is not sick. And there is a lodger facility which can be use to allow mothers to visit.

Researcher: okay in the your view what do you think we can do to facilitated infant parent bonding during covid-19?

Np03: okay what can be done , is allowing parents to stay because even some of us , I mean it was .... Nah in my view it was very crawl to shut the mothers out , while i as a nurse I will go home and come back, why cant the mom come and see the child , I think allowing those moms to come and see they child , like using precautionary measure not shutting them out altogether.

Researcher: I am ging to ask you two last questions 1<sup>st</sup> how did the covid 19 restriction make you feel?

Np03: restriction like .....i felt like our government were being crawl (laughing).... I felt like they we crawl to the moms and us as nurses. Ya...

Researcher: okay , so what do you think we can put in place to allow more frequent visiting by parents np03: by parents

Researcher : yes , you remember during that time parents where no visiting , so what can we do , we trying to change if something similar can come what can we put in place to allow frequent visiting hours?

Np03: like for neonatal unit nehh...I think what we can do is to have a... a barrier like a glass barrier, where parents can come and see their children, like when mom test positive they came come and see their child though that barrier even if they don't visit physical alike allowing them to see their babies

Researcher: thank you sister for your time

Np03: thank you.

### Interview 3:

Researcher: good morning sister how are you?

Np04: well thanks and how are you?

Researcher: fine. Thank you for volunteering to be part of my study ahhh the main question of the study is what are the challenges faced by nurses and parents to facilitate parent infant bonding and attachment during covid-19 in the neonatal ICU? What is it that made then unable to facilitated bonding and attachment?

Np04: firstly, it could be ill health, sickness. You find that the parent can get sick and maybe be hospitalized or maybe be quarantined and then the bonding is going to be distracted and the family role as well is going to be affected.

Researcher: so now tell me what do you think are the challenges that prevent or hinder bonding and attachments in the neonatal ICU DURING COVID -19? What is the challenge that prevent action of bonding and attachment?

Np04: the challenges were several challenges; you find that parent is not in the hospital and not allowed to come during covid or delay of results. May be parents took covid test and may be having delay of the outcome of covid also interrupt the bonding because the neonatal cannot bond with the mother and another it was also the problem of starvation; you find that the mother can't reach the hospital to provide with EBM then lead to baby to have shortage of milk as well.

Researcher: okay for the things that you have mentioned, what do you think we could or can do /use to facilitated bonding or improve bonding, like you mentioned the fact that result not coming early or parents not having results, what is it we can do to allow bonding to happen at that time.

Np04: maybe the swapping of covid maybe they prioritize like if you are a neonate's mother, you must be prioritized at the lab so your results can come out early so that you can continue with bonding.

Researcher: okay so aaaa do you think is important not to separated parents from their babies and why?

Npo4: yes the parents should not be separated from their babies because as we have said about bonding if we separate parent from the baby we are promoting the problem of separation and we are no longer going to facilitate bonding efficiently, so I think parent must not be separated from their neonate babies.

Researcher: I want to take you way back when the covid rules were... put in place neh. Do you think parents with infant in the neonatal ICU were considered when making the covid-19 rules.

Np04: repeat again.

Researcher: do you thin parents with infant in the neonatal ICU were considered when planning or writing the covid -19 rules ?

Np04: I think they were not included as much because if you a mom and the baby is a transfer from another hospital came here the mom has to follow the procedure of swapping here and go home again wait for the results, I think they were not considered when the do covid rules

Researcher: okay what do you think are the activities we can do as nurses to help parents and their infant to bond ?

Np04: the activities we can do , I think to follow the protocol of covid-19 like wearing of mask, having rubbing hands with alcohol frequently and we have to provide this mothers with alcohol spray and masks as well so that we can minimize this spread.

Researcher: in your view neh. What do you think can be done to improve bonding?

Np04: ya to improve bonding I think if the mother in my view we should speed up the process of testing. mother must be the priority if they taking swap their rests must come early as 6 hours time so that we can facilitate the bonding as well as if the mother can be tested and maybe found negative can be allowed as quick as possible to the hospital to bond with the baby

Researcher: thank you sister , I have two last questions for you neh.

Researcher: this one is about the way you feel, tell how covid-19 restrictions make you feel?

Np04: the restrictions eee, I was not comfortable with the restriction at all , sometime you find that you not allowed to even see your loved once .

Researcher: okay . what do you think we can putting place to allow more frequent visiting hours for parents during covid-19?

Np04; to increase visiting hours, make stop three hours to six hours to minimize the outside contact in neonate and emphasize more on preventative measure to control covid 19

Researcher: thank you sr

Np04: you welcome.

## Interview 5:

5 feb 2023 08:24

Researcher: good morning sister , how are you?

Np05: am good and how are you?

Researcher: thank you for volunteering in my study neh

Np05: okay

researcher: okay I'm going to start right ahead with the questions. the main questions are what are the challenges faced by nurses and parents to facilitated parent infant bonding and attachment during covid-19 in the neonatal ICU?

So when we say facilitate we regard action or process that can make thing easier.

Npo05: ok

Researcher: so what is it that can make things easier for parents in bonding and attachment during covid-19 according to your view

Npo3: what I think is , I think is it very important to keep the mother and the baby to bond even though the mother is covid -19 positive ,it is needed because the baby needs to gain weight immediately if there is no bond between mother and the child especially skin to skin, that mean the baby won't grow the way doing skin to skin. I think even though the mother is covid-19 positive or the baby is covid-19 positive I think they should continue with skin to skin, if they get treatment they will get treatment both of them. So, we won't like or give the baby opportunity to bond with the mother, do you understand, I don't think the covid-19 it has to be something that it stop that skin to skin attachment with the baby.

Researcher: tell in this unit what are thing that prevent bonding and attachment during covid-19?

Np05: what are the things that...

Researcher: what are the challenges that prevented bonding and attachment during covid-19 pandemic? Like what is it that made it difficult for us nurses that made it difficult to help mother to bond with baby .

Npo5: okay okay it is because they were rule that the mothers are not supposed to come to the baby ,they were not supposed to bring the milk, as you understand that the babies gets the mothers milk is going to bond though breastmilk and prevent NEC condition , it was so difficult because the rules has to be made that the parents are not supposed to see their kids , the doctors was supposed to take pictures to send the parents , so the was no bond between the mother and the babies and that was so difficult.

Researcher: so what so you think us as nurses we could have do to facilitate or come up with an idea that can help in the attainment and bonding?

Np05: aaah that why I am say this for me it was (clearing throat) okay I think it was something that delayed the babies to grow because even though they stopped the mothers to come to see the babies , they provided milk to the milk kitchen , we don't know how is that milk is it covid-19 positive



because they touch the milk and everything and the cup and everything then they took milk to the milk kitchen then it came to the babies ,I think they should have leave it they way it was the mothers come with the milk and bond with their babies if they are covid positive they will get treatment both od them and be well..

Researcher: okay. Do you think is important not to separate baby from their parents? If yes or no why?

Npo5: I think the parents and the babies are not supposed to be separated because when they are separated they won't get that bond, it feels good as baby to be with the mother and it feels good also for the mother to be with the baby and enjoy her motherhood . yes

Researcher: tell me ahhh what to you think eee covid-rules according to your view , do you think they considered the parents and the neonate when making covid rules ?

Npo5: no they didn't.

Researcher: why do you think so?

Npo5: because they separated the mother and the baby yes.

Researcher: so so basically your saying bonding was delay or child couldn't grow well because they could not do KMC .

NP05: YES the skin to skin especially the premature, they need skin to skin to grow.

Researcher: okay okay . what do you are the activities that as us nurses can do to facilitate bonding and attachment, ensuring that bonding is there. What is it we can do? To help the mother and the baby to bond.

Np05: to be honest I will encourage the mother to keep on breastfeeding and to do skin to skin is very very important that one

Reseacher : so do you think ahh pare ts will be able to do those activity during covid?

Npo5:as the rules. They were rule that they are not supposed to do that according to me it was , it would will make things easier if they allow them to bond or to see each other.

Researcher: it that time they didn't allow this activities how did it make you feel that they didn't allow this activity to be done?

Npo5: (deep breathing ) it made us feel some how but the is nothing we could do because they were rule and we won't break those rules that they are not supposed to come.

Researcher: so in your view generally what do you think we can do to improve bonding?

Npo5: I think it will be much better if they wanted our options, like other people when they do the research and everything so that they know how as nurses how we are feeling about this thing so that we can give them our import, how we understand the mother and the child things.

Researcher: okay, it about you tell me how covid -19 restrictions make you feel?

Npo5: in the hospital or in general?

Researcher: in general.

Npo5: I think it affected me aaaa very much because there are other things we couldn't do as human beings we were not allowed to do and also in south Africa lot of people lots their jobs and also most people lost their lifes, it affected lot of people.yes

Researcher: what do you think we can do to allow more frequent visiting hour for parents to see they babies during covid-19?

Npo5:I think the way it was 3 hourly was not that bad, because you know that immediately when the mothers come they gonna feed their babies and know they babies very well and provide breastfeeding the baby, even 3 hours is still fine.

Researcher : thank you sr sekati we come to the end of our interview and thank you to giving your time.

Npo5:okay

## Interview 6

5 feb 2023 08:2

Researcher: good morning sister , thank you for allowing me to come and doing this interview with you.

NPO6: yes thank you very much and good morning to you too.

Researcher: thank you, we gonna start with our main question like what are the challenges nurses faced to promote parent infant bonding and attachment in the Neonatal NICU during covid-19 pandemic?

Np06:eee the first challenge was that mother were separated from baby like for example if the baby was covid positive the mother was not allowed and the babies were isolated and only seen by the nurses, and then, so , as such the baby was separated from the parents , then more worse only the mothers at that time were if the baby pre-diagnosis the parents were , the mother was the only person allowed in and the father was not allowed inside and that created a space or what do you call it , between the mother and the baby. And the other thing is that , if the mother is positive , that time I was talking about if the baby is positive is taken in to an isolation and is only nursed by the nurses, and now if the mother is positive the mother is never allowed in to come and see the baby and that created lack of bonding between the mother and the baby and at that time also we are a baby friendly hospital we could not get a EBM milk from the mother so at that time baby had to start with donor EBM if is there or formular milk so COVID separated or it made it difficult for the mother and the baby to bond.

Researcher: thank you very much , and aaaa, you mentioned few thing so what do you think we could have done at that time as neonatal nurses could advocated for the parents , what could we have done to avoid the separation that you were talking about.

NPO6: Remember covid when it came it came like ablow to everybody there was no time to make proper rules so aa there was no time but if now because we saw what it has done maybe if it comes again they should be proper rules that are set there, so what we could have done at that time to promote bonding ,maybe when we isolated the baby or isolate the mother we must have aa proper same or isolation room for mothers and babies that are positive, if the mother positive with the baby there, if the baby positive allow only the mother to stay in the isolations rooms, I think that

could have worked, otherwise you have isolated them from other people but may if we had aa isolation rooms for them only.

Researcher: okay, do you with is important for parents not to be separated from their babies?

Np06: is it important for them not?

Researcher: not to be separated?

Np06: is very very important especially with babies we are encouraging attachment and bonding and it is very important because we want, as I said we are a baby friendly hospital , it was very very important, EMB to us is a crucial and a very important eeeee substance or what for prevention of infection , promotion of bonding mother and child, for mom also see to learn a lot from babies, ya so it very very important for mothers and the mother it's very important because at that time in the hospital its easy for nurses and doctors to teach the mothers and also to understand their babies conditions and to remember premature babies is only us nurses who can see or not afraid of premature, most mothers they are very afraid it a new thing to them so you need a mother to come to be in and out, most time give the mother extra time so they get used to and they get to bond with their babies, I don't know.

Researcher: OKAY , do you think parents and infants were considered when making covid rules?

Npo6: as I said early when covid just came like a boom so the rules where not properly made so I can say they were not considered.

Researcher: okay. So do you think there are any activities that we could have done to make it easy for parents to bond with the babies

Npo6; I think think questions repeat itself , because I sat yes, they could have been isolations room specifically for positive mother and a child to stay together.

Researcher: okay, we have two last questions , tell me how did Covid-19 restriction make you feel?

Npo06: the restrictions really affected us as nurses to start with we were all afraid , sometimes the PPE itself is uncomfortable , sometimes it was and the isolation of it also , what I have realised myself as a person if you nursing covid positive child there is a lot of aaaa , I don't know whether to put it as stress or confusion to children because we tend to nurse bigger children, the child becomes confused she doesn't know what to call you , your are a nurse next time when so body comes in is your mommy ,she doesn't know next time is a doctor or what ? , it also made us feel very very bad and even us it affect us with our families when you go home they are scared of you, you don't know how to held the families itself, so it was very very scarry , it also affected us in this way aaaa the isolation, most of us were affected because we contacted covid , you don't know if you contacted it in the ward or at home and what ever infection you got you take it home you are not sure whether you are the one who is infecting them or what , and on top of that there is no treatment for that , we were only treating symptoms and signs of what ever you present with so it did affect us.

Researcher: so what do you think we place to allow more frequent visiting hours for parents to see their babies?

Np06: as I asked also am still going back on that we could have isolated them and to me I think we should have allowed the fathers also to come in, they were not coming in as such the mother doesn't have support system at all and then you also separating the mother ,the father and the

baby. It was very scary but if there was an isolation the father could have been allowed in, I think that its

Researcher: thank you very much sister Ngwenya for you time I appreciate it, thank you

Npo06: thank you.

#### Interview 7:

25 february 09:40

Researcher: good morning sister how are you.

Np07: good doo and you.

Researcher : am good

Researcher: thank you for taking you time to be part of my study I appreciate it. Our main question will be what are the challenges faced by nurses and parents to facilitate parent -infant bonding and attachment during covid-19 in neonatal ICU. but there are question that that are broken down, so it easy for us to answer it. neh

Npo7; okay

Researcher : I am gonna start with one question, our question say : tell me what do you think are the challenges that prevent bonding and attachment during covid-19 in the neonatal ICU?

Npo7: what are there?

Researcher: what are the challenges, factors that made it difficult for parents to bond and attach with their babies.

Npo7: first I think is eeeee, the parents where at home and they are in contacted with lot of people, so we could not risk the fact that they come and room around like they used to because you know our babies they immune system is very very weak so I think this is one of the reasons, because they are in contact with lot of people outside we could not have let them room in.

Researcher: okay, what do you think we could have done to assist parents to bond with their babies?

Np07: okay if we were doing a proper screening maybe that would have help and maybe regular testing of the covid when we admit mom at the lodger side.

Researcher: okay, do you think is important for parents not to be separated from their babies? If yes why and if no why?

Npo7: repeat the question again.

Researcher: do you think its important for parents not to be separated from their babies.

Np07: yes it is

Researcher: And why

Npo7: because most of our mother here struggle with their milk so the more the bond with their babies the more production becomes good and easier.

Researcher: do you think parents with babies in the neonatal icu were considered when creating the covid-19 rules?

Npo7: I don't think they were considerate .

Researcher: why do you think so?

Np07: because aaaa let me put it this way maybe because of the scare and the rate the covid-19 .....(disturbed by someone opening the door and talking) think because of the disaster it clouded their judgement who ever made the rule and everything, because of the disaster ,

Researcher: okay, what do you think are the activities we could do to help the baby and mother bond?

Np07: the activities?

Researcher: yes

Npo7 kangaroo the baby

Researcher: okay AND aaaa we came to the of our interview, there are just two last questions that you need to answer.

No7: okay

Researcher: tell me how did covid restrictions make you feel?

Npo7:( deep breathing) hmmm it was very frustrating and stressful because I am originally from north west now I was locked up in Gauteng I was missing my family even do there are video call and everything but it was not enough so it was frustrating and stressful.

Researcher: okay. Do you think we can put in place the allowance of more frequent visiting hour by parents?

Npo7: mmmm I think that one is very tricky because what they have put in place works better. Or may could you repeat the question again.

Researcher: do think we can but allowance more frequent visiting hours for parents during covid - 19?

Npo7: oooh okay, it tricky. it was easy for the mother because they had lodger but for the fathers since they are coming home we don't know who they were in contact with .

Researcher: thank you sister tabane

Npo7: you welcome.

#### Interview 8:

07 feb 2023 10:04

Resaecher: thank you sister for giving me an opportunity to come and interview you , I really appreciate it that you volunteer to be part of the study.

NPO8: okay

Researcher:okay, we just going to ask few questions , other questions are repetition. The main focus we talking about what are the challenges faced by nurses and parents to facilitated parent -infant bonding and attachment during covid-19 in the neonatal icu.

Researcher: our first question, tell me what are the challenges that prevented bonding and attachment during covid 19.

Npo8: during the covid -19 period it was difficult for mothers to bond with their babies because you will find mother scared what if I am positive cause sometime you would find they would be false positive ee covid-19 results and they will be scared to pass the virus to them , not knowing that if they test is negative and then probably they still negative they just scared, you would find them they won't want to breastfeed tested or express milk thinking that the virus would pass though the milk , so it was actually a challenge for the babies because some of the mothers will be admitted for long period of time, they wont be able to see the baby will see them after weeks then the bonding stage 0-certain days is actually disrupted.

Researcher: okay what do you think we could have done at that moment to facilitate parent -infant bond?

Npo8: huuuuuuuh eeee as parents some of them they were , grandparents were not coming , but I think if the fathers would come more because of the mother are still in pain some are still scared at least if the father were available to come and facilitate the bonding , come with the milk and do the changing of the baby at least that bonding with the dad is much better not having a bond at all.

Researcher: do you think father were allowed at that time.

Npo8: yes, there was a period where they said mothers and fathers but after a certain period. But there was a time where they were no visitors but if only they could have given the father a chance but due to this covid it was difficult, at some point we had a low rate of baby admitted , so there we less rate of babies being admitted at less if there was enough space for social distancing in the unit they come mothers and daddy's , if the mother not there at least the father to come

Researcher: basically, you are saying that if there was enough space social distancing

Npo8: yes

Researcher: okay , do you think is important for parents not to be separated from their babies?

Np08; yes

Researcher: why?

Np08: because babies need their mothers , even if we are nurse or sister nursing the baby at the end of the day they go back with their parents at home, so let them start bonding with their kids while they still in hospital to give at least a certain health education to the parents not to just let them go think that they will know everything by themselves , they may known but still need that education.

Researcher: do you think covid-19 rules when they were planning them they considerate the parents and the neonate?

Npo8: no

Researcher: why do you say so?

Npo8: because it was manly ..... how to put it ..... it was protect the once that are note infected and cure the once that are infected so aaa, so that is easier for the once who were not infected by the virus to be more healthy but now forgetting that there is that part where mother needs to bond with their babies and you find that the mother is admitted in postnatal and they suspect that the

mother is positive , now the mom can't come , they just running tests and that time test would take time to come back due to the backlog , so ya it was bit difficult and it was ( with a sad face and facing down)

Researcher: at that time what do you think were the activities that would allow parents to bond and attach with their babies , like for example you talked about blood results that took time to come out. So what do you think we could have done.

Npo08: I dint know how to respond it was a very stress moment, because if the mother would cough or sweat not even underlining other issues they would say it covid so I don't know how put even suggesting taking the baby to the mother it was it was another problem , because we could not take the baby to the mother, what if the mom is really positive you actually exposing the child to the mother and the virus, if new knew about this virus way back maybe they should have been a room where there is a glass separating , then the mothers will be that side seeing their babies and identifying their babies even though they wont be any contact but at least knowing this is my baby , my baby still alive have hope.

Researcher: thank you sister we came to the end of our interview but the are two last questions to ask.

Npo8; okay

Researcher: tell me how did covid-19 restrictions make you feel?

Np08: yooo it made me feel bad I don't want to lie, it cut lot of aa social activities in my side, oooo,I am a person who always visit my mom most of the time, even if is the weekend or two days off I would go anytime but due to that period I could not see my mom we could only do video calls but that was not enough, not seeing other people eee and not seeing my family is was very difficult.and at the point you think maybe your positive luckily I didn't get any eee I wqs not tested positive any of this virus but still in the back of you mind you working in the hospital , what if your are a carrier and you go home with it then you infect your parents , then your parents get sick and die, so it will be as if is my fault, ya it was difficult.

Researcher: ok, then back to the patients neh. So what do you think we could put in place to allow more frequent visiting hours for parents?

Np08:we have different types of visitation in our unit but due to covid I think we could have made aaaa something maybe giving mother time , they could not come at the sometime, then we could have said the first four can come in and spend the time and not have , just have flexible hours of visiting than before we should not limit to the time of feeding like the 2 hourly , hourly visits after 2 hours at least now to make it more flexible , they can come but as long as we have 4 parents , mother and the dad in the unit , then after certain hours again, not to be stick at the time atleast expanding the time of visiting in the unit it was gonna be better .

Researcher: thank you sister mawela for taking time, appreciate it

Npo8: you welcome. I hope I answer you well

Researcher: yes you did

Npo08 : thank you

## Interview 9:

25 feb 09:22

Researcher: good morning sister how are you

Npo9: fine and you

Researcher: I'm good, thank for volunteering to be part of my study, aa our main questions is what are the challenges faced by nurses and parents to facilitate parent infant bonding and attachments during covid 19 pandemic in the neonatal ICU? Question will come out from this main question.

Npo9: okay

Researcher: so tell me what do you think are the challenges that prevented bonding and attachment in the neonatal ICU during Covid-19?

Npo9: during covid-19 time mother were not able to come and visit so it prevented lot of bonding cause they couldn't come they just phone to get the information about their babies , so their were no bonding between parents and their babies.

Researcher: so tell me what is it that we could have done to facilitated bonding and attachment during covid-19?

Npo9: mm I think they could have given even maybe half the time they used to come and visit, to just spend time with their babies, but we understand that it was a pandemic but I think time could have been done

Researcher: do you think is important not to separent parents from their babies and why?

Npo9: no it is very important for parents not to be separated from their babies because if there is no bonding the mother and the child do not bond they don't not see the feeding cues of the baby, they do not see the growth of the baby so if thy here with the baby as specially because most of our babies are premature baby is important to do kangaroo care so if they are not here is quit difficult. It delays the growth of the baby and also fr the feeding most of the babies ended up being given formular and we know that formular is not good for everybody.

Researcher: okay, do you think parents with infant in the neonatal ICU were considered when applying covid -19 regulations. if yes or no why?

Npo9: (shaking head) nnn no I don't think they were considered because at that time they were just looking at the pandemic and they were not looking at the benefits of the baby so I think it was not considered at all, cause I think they still should been given a small time to bond with their babies. They would just take precautionary measure just to make sure the baby doesn't get covid-19.

Researcher: what do you think are the activity that can be done to allow parents to bond with their babies?

Npo9: mm I think the visiting hours should be revisited and I wish the lodger facility or the KMC facility was closer to the NICU so that mothers are able to see their babies more often.

Researcher: we came to the end the interview they are two last questions

Npo9: okay.



Researcher: tell me how covid-19 restriction made you feel?

Npo9: mm it was really frustrating because we had to do everything for the babies , struggling with milk because the mother is not here, we struggling to give mother information because they are not allowed to come to the hospital so it was a bit over warming as especially now that even people were afraid to the unit even the people working in the hospital were afraid to come to the NICU, even if you had so things to discuss they were not able to come to the unit. So for the parents shame it was , most of the mother would call or get a call from the hospital but with attachment they was none what so ever, so in that way I think it took a lot of bonding and attachment away from the babies and the parents.

Researcher: this question you have answered it but I am just gonna repeat it because we recording , what do think we could put in place to allow more frequent visiting hours for parents?

Npo9: I think the lodger facility and the kmc facility should be closer to neonatal unit so that the mothers can be there to breast feed all the time to learn how to change nappies and to be able bond with the mothers , so now the disavadege is that the lodger facility is very far so it take time to come here and then given only an hour in the unit so if the hours are extended then they can spend most of the time here.

Researcher; thank you sister lerato for taking time and being part of my research I appreciate it.

Npo9 : thank you

#### Interview 10:

24 feb 20:10

Researcher: thank you siter for allowing me time to come and interview you .

Np10: okay

Researcher: sister are main question is what the challenges are faced by parents to facility

Parent infant bonding and attachment during covid-19 pandemic in the neonatal ICU? I will start with my first question. Tell me what re the challenges that prevented bonding and attachment in the neonatal ICU during covid-19? You can start thinking 2020 until locked was stopped.

Np10: repeat the question.

Researcher: any challenges we as nurses had during covid-19 in making sure that mother bond with their babies and attach.

Np10:it was so difficult for mothers to attach to their babies because they were not allowed to come to the ward.

Researcher: what do you think it could have been do at that point to allow parents to bond with their babies, what is the strategies that you could have come with,

Np10: at least the mother they we supposed to re allow them to come once maybe coming in wearing the attire that were wear at covid ward.

Researcher: do you think it is important to for parents to be separated from their babies and why

Np10: yes, to create bond between mother and child

Researcher: okay, do you think parents with infant in the NICU were considerate when making making covid-19 regulation rules, do you think the rule covered the parents and the child ?

Np10: yes

Researcher: what are the activities that we could have done in order for mother and baby to bond.

Np10: we could allow parents to come and see their babies while wearing PPE and washing of has also so that they can hold their babies and KMC , we could have also allow them to take off the mask when communicating with the baby so they can recognise they parents face.

Researcher: there are two more question then we at the end of our interview. tell me who did covid-19 restriction make you feel.

Np10: I was so frustrated thinking of leaving the job.

Researcher: do you think we could have put allows of more frequent visiting hours for parents?

Np10: no because the law didn't allow.

Researcher: thank you sister for giving me time

Np10 thank you.

#### Interview 11:

24 FEB 19:59

Researcher : good every sister , how are you

Np11: good evening sister

researcher :thank you for volunteering to be part of this study , I am not gonna take such of you time , the questions are straight forward.

Np11: okay

Researcher: the main question is what are the challenges faced by nurses and parents in facilitating parents -infant bonding in NICU during covid-19? There are question coming out from the main question

Np11: oka

Researcher: tell me what do you think are the challenges that prevented bonding and attachment in the NICU DURING COVID-19?

Np11: During covid, problem number that we had , visitor were not allowed and some of other mothers were not admitted as lodger mothers , so in that way they could not have time to bind with their babies because under normal circumstance mothers are allowed be with their children so that they are thought how to care for their babies now that we are encouraging kangaroo care, so with covid we didn't have chance to do so.

Researcher: okay, tell me what could we have done to facilitate bonding and attachment in the NICU DURING COVID-19?

Np11: I will have to think about that one , skip lets go to other one then will come back to that one

Researcher: okay do you think is important for parents not to be separated from their babies?

Np11: yes it is , because now during the care of the baby the baby is gone stay long in the NICU , mothers need to be thought how to care for the baby while they still in ICU, because the baby will be taken to high care then further to kangaroo ward for monitoring the growth of the babies.

Researcher: do you think parents with infant in the neonatal unit were considered when making covid-19 rules?

Np11: I don't think so they were considered because now the only thing the thought at the time was just to contain the virus so it does not spread, most of the thing were not considered.

Researcher: so now what do you think are the activities we could have do to facilitated bonding and attachment ?

Np11: if thing were like before ,now that this it was a deadly virus , we could have have taken the part of the mother maybe sometime you Could have Kangaroo the baby, but because of the nature of the virus even that we could not even do that.

Researcher: we came to the end of the interview but there are two questions that I need to ask you.

Np11: mmm

Researcher: tell me how did covid-19 restriction make you feel?

Ssince.....

Np11: it was bad in such away that there was no interaction, whether at work or at home

It was bad, because they was this separation so you could not interact as we normally do due to this restrictions and with far of spreading the virus and not getting the virus.

Researcher: what do you think we could have put in place to allow more frequent visiting hours by parents?

Np11: maybe we could have allowed them to come like in our ward we don't have the normal visitation hours like in other units in the hospital , maybe that one should not been taken aways as they did because now by doing so they took all the interaction with baby for not allowing parents to come at all. I think they should have sticked to the visitation we were doing normal before covid.

Researcher: back to the question skipped. tell me what could we have done to facilitate bonding and attachment in the NICU DURING COVID-19?

Np11: Allowing parents to visit: Implementing measures to allow parents to visit their babies in the NICU while following appropriate safety protocols. Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC), Ensuring effective and regular communication between healthcare providers and parents. This can help parents feel involved in their baby's care and provide them with updates and information to alleviate anxiety and promote attachment. Utilizing technology to facilitate virtual visits between parents and their babies in the NICU. This can involve video calls or other platforms that allow parents to see and interact with their infants remotely, Emotional support, Education and guidance and Recognizing parents faces

Researcher : that you sister for taking time in answering my question.

Np11: thank you

## Interview 12:

23 feb 19:53

Researcher: good evening sister , thank you for taking time to allow me to interview and to volunteer to be part of my study.so our research is about challenge that we faced by nurses and parents in facilitating parent infant bonding and attachment during covid-19 in the neonatal ICU? There are questions that are from the main question.

Researcher: tell me what do you think are the challenges that prevented parent infant bonding during covid in the neonatal ICU?

Np12: problems like and bonding of?

Researcher: of mother, like what were the challenge that prevent us allowing parents to bond with their babies.

Np12: the thing is we did not allow fathers to come and see their babies, so for me they were denied chance to bind with their babies while they were still here.

Researcher: okay , what is it that we could have done to facilitate bonding and attachment?

Np12 : maybe if we could have reduced visiting hours for the father maybe at least once a day instead of denying them

Researcher: okay. Do you think it is important not to separate babies from their parents and why?

Np12: yes, because if you separate them bonding will not take place, the child become more attached to the person she/he spend time with. So to encourage bonding and attachment then parents needs to see their babies and touch them.

Researcher; okay do you parents and infant in NICU where not considered when making covid-19 regulations rules and why do you say so?

Np12: they were considered because we were avoiding infection so for me we give child priority.

Researcher: okay, eeee my going to ask a question this one is about how you felt during covid-19,tell me how did covid-19 restriction made you feel.

Np12. It goes back to separation from their parents so .....

Researcher; for you not the parents

Np12: for me I did not have a problem with it.

Researcher: what do you think we can put in place to allow more frequent visiting ours for parents?

Np12: no

Researcher: thank you sister Mokwena for answering our questions, we come to the end of the interview.

Np12: thank you.

## Interview 13:

23 feb 21:15

Researchers: good evening sister, thank you for volunteering to be part of the study. my research topic is what are the challenges faced by nurses and parents to facilitate parent infant bonding and attachment in the NICU during covid-19 pandemic?

Np13: evening

Researcher: tell me what do you think are the challenges that prevented bond and attachment in this NICU?

Np13: One of the major challenges is the strict visitation restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many parents, especially fathers, were not allowed to visit their babies regularly or were completely denied access.

This lack of regular contact and physical presence can significantly impact the bond and attachment between parents and their infants. Another challenge is the limited interaction time between parents and their babies due to the critical nature of the neonatal ICU. Infants in the NICU require constant medical attention, monitoring, and specialized care, which can limit the amount of time parents can spend with their babies.

This limited interaction can hinder the development of a strong bond and attachment between parents and their infants. Additionally, the emotional and physical stress experienced by parents in the NICU can affect their ability to establish a strong bond. Seeing their fragile newborns in critical condition, undergoing medical procedures, and facing uncertainty about their health can be overwhelming for parents.

This stress can interfere with their ability to fully engage in bonding activities and form a strong emotional connection with their infants. Language and cultural barriers can also pose challenges in facilitating bond and attachment in the NICU. South Africa is a diverse country with various cultures and languages. It is important for healthcare providers to effectively communicate with parents in their preferred language and understand cultural practices that may influence parent-infant bonding. Failure to address these barriers can impede the establishment of a strong bond between parents and their babies.

Lastly, the lack of resources and support for parents in the NICU can hinder bond and attachment. Providing parents with adequate education, emotional support, and counseling can significantly enhance their ability to bond with their infants. However, due to resource constraints and high patient loads, it may be challenging to provide comprehensive support to parents in the NICU.

Addressing these challenges, I maintained requires a multi-faceted approach involving improved visitation policies, increased parental support, effective communication strategies, and a nurturing environment that promotes parent-infant bonding.

Researcher: okay, what do you think we could have done to facilitated parent-infant bond, or use to help parents bond easily with their babies?

Np13: Virtual Visitation: We could have set up virtual visitation options, such as video calls, to allow parents to see and interact with their babies remotely. This would have enabled them to maintain a connection and witness their baby's progress despite physical separation.

Enhanced Communication: We could have implemented regular and effective communication channels between healthcare providers and parents. This would involve providing detailed updates

on the baby's condition, progress, and care plans. Clear and transparent communication helps parents feel involved and reassured about their baby's well-being.

**Parent Education:** We could have provided comprehensive educational materials and resources to parents on various aspects of neonatal care and bonding techniques. This would empower parents with knowledge and skills to actively participate in their baby's care, even when physical presence is limited.

**Individualized Care Plans:** Each baby and family have unique needs. By tailoring care plans and interventions based on the specific requirements of the baby and the preferences of the parents, we could have promoted a sense of ownership and involvement in the care process. This individualized approach would have helped parents feel more connected to their babies.

**Kangaroo Care:** Kangaroo care, also known as skin-to-skin contact, is a powerful bonding method. Promoting and encouraging kangaroo care sessions with appropriate infection control measures in place could have facilitated bonding between parents and their babies, even during the pandemic.

**Parent Support Groups:** Establishing virtual or online support groups for parents with babies in the NICU would have provided a platform for sharing experiences, offering emotional support, and exchanging advice. Connecting parents who are going through similar situations can help reduce feelings of isolation and promote bonding among families.

**Psychosocial Support:** Recognizing the emotional impact of the pandemic on parents, we could have provided additional psychosocial support services. This may include counseling services, access to mental health professionals, and support networks to help parents cope with the stress and emotional challenges they may face. By implementing a combination of virtual communication, education, individualized care plans, kangaroo care, support groups, and psychosocial support, we could have facilitated parent-infant bonding and made it easier for parents to form strong connections with their babies in the NICU, even during the challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Researcher: do you think it is important not to separate parents from their babies?**

**Np13:** I believe it is incredibly important not to separate parents from their babies whenever possible. Parent-infant bonding and attachment are crucial for the well-being and development of the baby, especially in the delicate environment of the NICU. The presence of parents provides emotional support, comfort, and reassurance to both the infant and themselves.

When parents are actively involved in the care of their babies, they can form a strong bond that promotes better outcomes for the infant. This bonding helps create a sense of security, promotes healthy attachment, and fosters a nurturing environment even within the hospital setting.

Furthermore, parents play an essential role in their baby's care, working closely with the healthcare team to understand their child's medical condition, receive education on their care needs, and participate in decision-making processes. By allowing parents to stay close to their babies, we empower them to be active participants in their child's care, which ultimately contributes to better outcomes and family-centered care.

While there may be situations where separation is necessary due to medical interventions or infection control measures, every effort should be made to facilitate parental presence and involvement. This can include measures such as adjusted visiting hours, providing private spaces for parents within the unit, implementing infection control protocols, and offering emotional support to

parents during their stay. I strongly believe in the importance of keeping parents and babies together whenever feasible. It is vital for the well-being of both the infants and their parents, promoting bonding, attachment, and active involvement in their baby's care

**Researcher: do you think parents and infant in the NICU were considered when making covid-19 rule?**

Np13: I believe that parents and infants in the NICU were indeed considered when making COVID-19 rules. The primary goal was to protect the health and safety of both the infants and their families. The restrictions and guidelines implemented were aimed at minimizing the risk of infection and transmission within the NICU.

Initially, the rules might have seemed strict and challenging for parents, such as limited visitation or temporary separation of parents from their babies. However, these measures were put in place to safeguard the vulnerable infants who often have weakened immune systems. By limiting external exposure, we aimed to reduce the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission to infants in the NICU.

As the understanding of COVID-19 and its transmission evolved, adjustments were made to strike a balance between infection prevention and supporting parent-infant bonding. Hospitals and healthcare providers recognized the importance of parental presence and involvement in their baby's care, considering the emotional and developmental benefits it provides.

For instance, over time, restrictions were modified to allow at least one parent to be present during deliveries and for limited visitation, taking necessary precautions like wearing masks and practicing proper hand hygiene. These changes were made to ensure parents could bond with their babies while still prioritizing the safety of everyone involved.

It's crucial to understand that the decisions surrounding COVID-19 rules in the NICU were complex and continuously evolving, taking into account the available scientific evidence, expert recommendations, and local circumstances. The well-being of both the infants and their parents was always at the forefront of these considerations.

**Researcher: do you think we could have allowed an activity that will allow parents to bond with their babies, maybe create an activity that will allow them to bond with their babies?**

Np13: I understand the importance of parent-infant bonding and the challenges faced in facilitating it. While the safety measures and restrictions in place were necessary to prevent the spread of the virus, finding alternative activities to promote bonding between parents and their babies was a priority.

We explored various options to foster parent-infant bonding despite the limitations. One approach we implemented was encouraging virtual interactions between parents and their babies through video calls or teleconferencing. This allowed parents to see their infants, hear their voices, and feel connected, even if they couldn't be physically present.

We also provided support and guidance to parents on techniques such as kangaroo care, which involves skin-to-skin contact between the parent and baby. We educated parents on the benefits of this practice and ensured they were comfortable and confident in implementing it safely when they had the opportunity to visit. We could have promoted bonding through other sensory experiences. We encouraged parents to bring in items with their scent, such as blankets or clothing, which could be placed near the baby's incubator. This could have helped create a familiar and comforting environment for the baby, facilitating the bonding process.

These activities would have played a crucial role in maintaining the parent-infant bond during a challenging time. Our aim was to support parents emotionally and provide them with opportunities to connect with their babies, even if it had to be done in unconventional ways.

Researcher: okay, sister moshupi thank you, there are last two question that we need to ask, tell me how did covid restriction make you feel?

Np13: the COVID-19 restrictions made me feel a mix of emotions. Initially, it was challenging and overwhelming to adapt to the sudden changes and new protocols that were put in place to prevent the spread of the virus. The restrictions created a sense of uncertainty and anxiety as we were dealing with a novel virus and had limited knowledge about its impact on newborns and their parents.

One of the most difficult aspects was witnessing the separation between parents and their babies. It was heartbreaking to see parents unable to hold or touch their newborns freely due to the fear of infection. The bond between parents and infants is crucial for their emotional well-being and development, and the restrictions limited the opportunities for this vital connection to be established.

Additionally, the strict visitation policies meant that parents had limited access to their babies. This led to heightened stress and feelings of helplessness for both the parents and us as healthcare providers. It was challenging to provide emotional support to families during this time when physical presence and reassurance were limited.

Moreover, the shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) added to the stress and anxiety. Ensuring the safety of both the infants and the healthcare providers was of utmost importance, but the scarcity of PPE created additional concerns about our own well-being and the risk of transmitting the virus.

However, despite these challenges and emotions, as healthcare professionals, we adapted and worked tirelessly to provide the best care possible for our tiny patients. We implemented alternative ways of supporting parents, such as video calls and regular communication updates, to help bridge the physical gap and ensure they remained connected to their babies.

Over and above, the COVID-19 restrictions in the neonatal ICU made me feel a deep sense of compassion for the families and a determination to provide the best care under the circumstances. It was a challenging time, but the resilience and dedication of the healthcare team and the strength shown by the parents and infants helped us navigate through this difficult period together.

Researcher: do you think we could have put in place allowance of frequent visiting hour for parents?

Np13: I understand the importance of parental presence and bonding with their babies. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we faced numerous challenges and restrictions to ensure the safety and well-being of both parents and infants.

Implementing frequent visiting hours for parents would have been ideal to encourage bonding. However, it's important to consider that the decision to restrict visitation was not solely made by the hospital but was in line with national regulations and guidelines imposed to control the spread of the virus.



During the peak of the pandemic, South Africa, like many other countries, experienced strict lockdown measures with limited movement. Hospitals had to adhere to these restrictions, which included minimizing non-essential personnel and visitors. This was done to protect vulnerable patients, including infants in the NICU, from potential exposure to the virus.

While it would have been beneficial to have more flexibility with visiting hours, the priority was to maintain a safe environment for everyone involved. As healthcare professionals, we followed the guidelines set by the government and medical authorities to ensure the health and well-being of both our patients and their families.

It's important to note that as the situation evolved and more knowledge about COVID-19 was gained, adjustments were made to accommodate parents and facilitate bonding to the extent possible within the given restrictions. As healthcare providers, we continually strive to strike a balance between safety and the emotional needs of families in the NICU.

Moving forward, as the situation improves and restrictions are lifted, we can explore opportunities to enhance parent-infant bonding and establish more flexible visiting hours. It will require collaboration between healthcare providers, hospital administration, and policymakers to find the best possible solutions that prioritize the health and safety of all while supporting the crucial parent-infant bond in the NICU.

Researcher: thank you sister Moshupi for answering my questions .

Np13: thank you.

#### Interview 14:

23 feb 20:15

Researchers: good evening sister , that you for volunteering to be part of the study.my research topic is what are the challenges faced by nurses and parents to facilitate parent infant bonding and attachment in the NICU during covid-19 pandemic?

Researcher: there will be few questions that will be coming from the main question throughout the interview neh, I am not gonna wait much of you time will go straight to the questions.

Np14: okay

Researcher: tell me what you think are the challenges that hinder bond and attachment in this NICU, prevented.

Np14: thank you for having me, firstly I will think the restrictions about visitations and as well as shortage of PPE for parents.

Researcher: okay, what do you think we could have done to facilitated parent-infant bond, or use to help parents bond easily with their babies?

Np14: aaya because nobody knew anything about covid-19, it would be, more risker to take chances, I wont say they would have been anything better to be done. Things were done to prevent the spread of covid-19 hence the restrictions, I don't think it was done to japer dice the bonding between the parents and the baby , the restriction were preventative measures. And why

Researcher: do you think it is important not to separate parents from their babies?

Np14: yes it important, and it has been proven that babies who don't have a bond with their parents have problems growing up especially psychologically.

Researcher: do you think parents and infant in the NICU were considered when making covid-19 rule?

Np14: I can say in the beginning they did not but as time went on , yes there were considered because restriction were changed for them for example initially the father we not allowed during delivers and the mother were allowed to touch their babies with mask on to prevent spread.

Researcher: at the beginning where father allowed to see their babies?

Np14: no,

Researcher: do you think we could have allowed an activity that will allow parents to bond with their babies, maybe create an activity that will allow them to bond with their babies?

Np14: remember, that time it was difficult, for everyone because clearly nobody knew how this covid spread, what were the risk if someone were exposed to a person who is from outside or a person who is not using PPE properly.

Researcher: okay, sister thank you, there are last two question that we need to ask, tell me how did covid restriction make you feel?

Np14: it was yeeeee , it was bad, truly speaking it was bad ,aaaa I couldn't imagen myself not able to hold my baby, remember other had to go home because they did not have covid results, after delivery mothers will be released to go home wait for covid results , that when they will be allowed to the unit , though they were using PPE but those were some of the restrictions that were to my side it was unreasonable but beyond our control.

Researcher: do you think, the hospital could have done covid test when the mom was in the unit before delivery?

Np14: on admission that would have been , could have made thing mush better so that by the time mother deliver already the results are out.

Researcher: do you think we could have put in place allowance of frequent visiting hour for parents?

Np14: remember even the government would not allow movement within hospitals so it was , it was not the hospital restriction but national restrictions so unfortunately that was it especially level 5 and level 4.( laughing)

Researcher: thank you sister for answering my questions and you are no duty

Np14: thank you.