Findings
Evidence shows that increase in visitors to the NICU is not associated with an increase in infection rates, provided that the visitors are free of cold or flu-like symptoms. An increased number in visitors has been correlated with shorter NICU stays and allows the parents to be supported during this stressful time. Evidence further shows that handwashing, wiping down cell phones with antibacterial wipes, and cleansing skin before kangaroo care, are effective strategies for infection prevention in the NICU.

Implications for Practice
Towards the completion of our project, we were contacted by more senior nurses who had been working towards changing our visitation policy. Our findings correlated exactly with theirs. Visitation policy changes have now been approved which will take place in late February. Parents will be allowed to have more visitors at the bedside, and will no longer be restricted to a permanent list of 4 or less visitors for their child’s entire stay. The flyer was placed throughout the NICU to educate staff on the fact that our policies will be changing and why. This will help educate staff before the changes take place so that nurses will be receptive to the new dynamics of visitation in our unit.

Methods
13 articles were reviewed and appraised by our group. Each member of our group was responsible for finding and reviewing one or more studies and articles related to our PICO question. The evidence shows that an increased number of healthy visitors to the NICU does not cause a higher infection rate, revealing that the current policy in our NICU is not evidence based practice.

Our group made an educational flyer explaining that research shows that our current policy is not based on evidence of infection prevention. This flyer was sent to Child Life Services and the head of the NICU Infection Prevention Committee along with our sources. The flyer was posted throughout the unit to educate staff that our current policies are not evidence based and that changes in our visitation policy will be implemented in the NICU in February 2019.

References

Project Contact
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