### Premature Birth

- Infants born before 38 weeks gestation
- At risk for developmental, medical, and neurological problems
- Common Complications
  - Cerebral palsy
  - Feeding difficulties
  - Compromised respiration
  - CNS–Hypoxic insults
  - Damage corticospinal tracts

### Impact of Developmental Care

- Decreased incidence of IVH, ROP, infection, and chronic lung disease
- Improved behavioral organization and cognitive development until age 2
- Less hyper-reactivity, improved posture, and more appropriate reflexes at 2 weeks corrected age (CA)
- Fewer medical diagnoses, and better gross and fine motor coordination at 9 months CA

### Relevance to Physical Therapy

- Infants discharged from the NICU are a developmentally at-risk population
- PT services will continue to be an integral part of care
- Decreasing complications while in the NICU mean decreased patient acuity when seen after discharge
- Our role
  - Education
  - Referral to community services
  - Address physical impairments and functional limitations

### What is Developmental Care?

- Multi-disciplinary care practices implemented in the NICU to reduce stressful external stimuli
  - Kangaroo care
  - Infant positioning
  - Clustering care
  - Light / Noise control
  - Self-calming behaviors
- Based on Als’ foundational work in the 1980s, NIDCAP

### References


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