

**Table 2** Summary of articles included in the review

Ref No	Author & year	Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Methodology</li> <li>ii. Study</li> <li>iii. Design data collection</li> <li>iv. Methods data analysis</li> </ul>	Participants (sample + setting)	Aim	Key findings
4	Rabelo Chaves, Cardoso and Sherlock (2007)	Feelings and expectations of mothers of preterm babies at discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Descriptive study used by Bardin's framework to collect data</li> <li>iii. Form with questions about mothers' feelings and expectations regarding their premature infant's discharge from the NICU</li> <li>i. Coded and categorized according to references pertinent to the theme</li> </ul>	11 mothers  Country: Brazil	To investigate the feelings and expectations of mothers of preterm babies at discharge.	Although mothers' experienced excitement and happiness at discharge, many reported being anxious and insecure about how to take care of their preterm babies
5	Dellenmark-Blom and Wigert (2014)	Parents' experiences with neonatal home care following the neonatal intensive care unit: a phenomenological interview study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Descriptive study</li> <li>iii. Interview</li> <li>iv. Phenomenological hermeneutic method</li> </ul>	22 parents  Country: Sweden	Descriptive study of parents' experiences with neonatal home care following initial care in a neonatal unit	Neonatal home care is experienced as a care adjusted to incorporate parents' needs following discharge from a neonatal unit. It appears to bridge the gap between hospital and home, supporting the family's adaptation to life in the home setting, parents become empowered to be primary caregivers, having nurse consultants serving the needs of the whole family.
6	Brodsgaard, Zimmerman and Petersen (2015)	A preterm lifeline: Early discharge programme based on family-centered care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Longitudinal qualitative research</li> <li>iii. Longitudinal growth assessment of 218 premature infants and qualitative synthesis of 2 focus group interviews with 15 parents</li> <li>iv. Interviews processed in deductive theory-driven content analysis, summarised to 5 syntheses which were then analysed</li> </ul>	218 premature infants and 15 parents  Country: Denmark	To present an early discharge programme model for preterm infants based on family-centered care, and to describe its impact on the infants and families	6% infants were readmitted (6 with infection, 4 cyanotic episodes, 2 with complications related to inguinal hernias). Otherwise, the experience of parents was reflected in the final theme of them being 'in control with a lifeline to neonatal intensive care unit', and in the sub-themes of 'equality between parents and nursing staff', 'shared responsibility and information', 'collaboration, negotiation and partnership'.

11	Raffray, Semenic, Osorio Galeano and Ochoa Marín (2014)	Barriers and facilitators to preparing families with premature infants for discharge home from the neonatal unit. Perceptions of health care providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Descriptive study</li> <li>iii. Interviews</li> <li>i. Coding and analysis using qualitative content analysis</li> </ul>	<p>15 neonatal health care providers</p> <p>Country: Colombia</p>	To explore Colombian health care provider perceptions of barriers and facilitators to preparing families with premature infants for discharge home from NICU	Participants' responses centred on establishment of parent-infant bond, acquisition of parenting skills and getting ready for the transition from hospital to home. Barriers: obstacles to parental visiting in NICU, communication barriers, difficulty in establishment of successful breastfeeding, insufficient human resources and poor links between hospital and community-based resources.
14	Burnham, Feeley and Sherrard (2013)	Parents' perceptions regarding readiness for their infant's discharge from the NICU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Descriptive study</li> <li>iii. Interview</li> <li>iv. Qualitative content analysis</li> </ul>	<p>20 parents (10 pre-discharge, 10 post-discharge)</p> <p>Country: Canada</p>	To identify what parents need to feel ready for the discharge of their infant from the neonatal unit	Parents indicated a need for information and hands-on experience to enhance their readiness for discharge. Observations of their infant and of the NICU environment impacted parents' perceptions of their infant's readiness for discharge, which influenced perceptions of their own readiness for discharge. Parents require tailoring of info and experiences to meet the unique needs of their family
15	Enlow, Anderson, Jovel, Chamberlain, Lorch and Herbert (2014)	Neonatal intensive care unit to home: the transition from parent and paediatrician perspectives, a prospective cohort study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Quantitative</li> <li>ii. Prospective, observational cohort study</li> <li>iii. Surveys for parent discharge, parent follow-up and pediatricians (content from lit review)</li> <li>iv. SPSS statistics, independent t-test, Mann-Whitney U-test. Analysed using Fisher's exact test. Ordinal data from Likert-type scale questions were analysed using Kruskal-Wallis test</li> </ul>	<p>79 parents, 17 paediatricians</p> <p>Country: USA</p>	To describe the experience of a low-income population during the transition from the neonatal unit to home and to compare these experiences with paediatrician perspectives	Communication difficulties were the most commonly reported barriers during the neonatal unit stay. Physicians overestimated the frequency that families experienced challenges after discharge. Parent input is important to create effective interventions aimed at improving care and limiting disparities
16	Espitia and Gonzalez, (2013)	Retrieving the offspring and caring for it during the first night at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Interpretative phenomenological study</li> </ul>	<p>10 mothers</p>	To describe the experiences of mothers caring for their preterm	Release from hospital was interpreted as an event that permits them to retrieve the infant that did

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii. Interviews</li> <li>iv. Information analysis (during data collection &amp; upon finishing data collection with profound analysis of interviews)</li> </ul>	Country: Colombia	infants on the first day after being discharged from the hospital	not belong to them but to the hospital personnel. 1 <sup>st</sup> night was undertaken with uneasiness, angst and total dedication. Mothers doubt their own capacity to care for the baby. It is necessary to implement strategies that permit mothers to know their babies and participate in care during hospitalization to build trust in their capacity to care for their infants at home
17	Flacking, Ewald and Starrin (2007)	"I wanted to do a good job": Experiences of 'becoming a mother' and breastfeeding in mothers of very preterm infants after discharge from a neonatal unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Descriptive study</li> <li>iii. Interview</li> <li>iv. Open coding, gradually replaced by selective coding (focus on presentation of detailed descriptions)</li> </ul>	25 mothers, whose very preterm infants received care in 7 neonatal units (Nus)  Country: Sweden	To find out how mothers of very preterm infants experience the process of becoming a mother, and breastfeeding after the discharge from the neonatal unit	Pendular swings from feeling emotionally exhausted to feeling relieved, from experiencing an insecure to a secure bond, and from regarding breastfeeding as being non-reciprocal to being reciprocal. Unresolved grief and the institutional authority in the NNU and experiences of shame were three of central barriers to a secure and reciprocal relationship.
18	Garfiled, Lee and Kim (2014)	Paternal and maternal concerns for their very low-birth weight (VLBW) infants transitioning from the NNU to home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Descriptive study</li> <li>iii. Phone interviews</li> <li>iv. Narrative analysis (codebook)</li> </ul>	25 parents (10 father, 15 mothers)  Country: USA	To examine the concerns and coping mechanisms of mothers and fathers of VLBW infants as they transition to home from the neonatal unit	Overriding concerns included pervasive uncertainty, lingering medical concerns, and partner-related adjustment concerns that differed by gender. Parents felt that this concerns can be addressed with improved discharge information exchanges and anticipatory guidance. Supporting parents during this stressful and often difficult transition may lead to decreased family stress, improved care and better infant outcomes
19	Griffin and Pickler (2011)	Hospital-to-home transition of mothers of preterm infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Descriptive phenomenology</li> <li>iii. Interview (between 2 and 4 weeks after infant's discharge)</li> <li>iv. Colaizzi seven-step process</li> </ul>	10 mothers, single, under 25, and African American  Country: USA	To describe mothers' experiences during the first month after their preterm infants' hospital discharge	There were 5 themes clusters that described mothers' experiences: dealing with an expected pregnancy outcome, experiencing the reality of taking care of a baby alone, struggling to adjust to the maternal role, enhancing maternal inner

						strength and changing maternal lifestyle
21	Hutchinson, Spillett and Cronin (2012)	Parents' experiences during their infant's transition from neonatal intensive care unit to home: a qualitative study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Grounded theory design (Glaser &amp; Strauss, 1967, Strauss &amp; Corbin, 1998)</li> <li>iii. Interview</li> <li>v. Constant comparative method, and theory development, <i>Model of Parental Progression</i></li> </ul>	12 NICU parents' Country: USA	To examine the question, "what are the experiences of parents during their infant's transition from the neonatal unit to home?"	The basic social psychological process identified was "becoming a parent" which was based on the core problem "I'm not a parent"
22	Murdoch and Franck (2011)	Gaining confidence and perspective: a phenomenological study of mothers' lived experiences caring for infants at home after neonatal unit discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Descriptive study</li> <li>iii. Interview</li> <li>vi. Descriptive phenomenological approach and analysed using Giorgi's framework</li> </ul>	9 mothers Country: USA	To explore mothers' experiences in caring for preterm or term infants following discharge from a neonatal unit, including how they manage infant pain or discomfort	Apprehension-confidence continuum model provides a framework for nursing assessment of mothers' needs following their infants' discharge from a neonatal unit. Factors such as infant health, medical procedures, and family or health professional support may influence the degree of apprehension or confidence.
23	Olsthain-Mann and Auslander (2008)	Parents of preterm infants 2 months after discharge from the hospital: are they still at (parental) risk?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Quantitative</li> <li>ii. Non-matched comparison study</li> <li>iii. Interview both parents</li> <li>i. Multivariate analysis (identify factors related to parental stress &amp; competence among parents of preterm infants for mothers &amp; fathers using linear regression) and preliminary bivariate analysis (identify variables related to dependent variables, stress &amp; parental competence)</li> </ul>	80 pairs of parents of preterm babies and 80 pairs of full-term babies Country: Israel	To gain further understanding of the emotional state and functioning of parents of preterm infants after an initial period of adjustment following discharge from the NNU	At 2 months, parents of preterm infants still show higher levels of parental stress and lower perceptions of parental competence than do parents of full-term infants
24	Osorio Galeano, Ochoa Marin and Semenic (2017)	Preparing for premature baby care: parenting experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Qualitative study</li> <li>iii. Interviews (semi-structured)</li> <li>iv. Open and axial coding</li> </ul>	10 parents Country: Colombia	To describe the experiences of parents of premature infants before the discharge of the neonatal unit	Parents experience ambivalent feelings because the joy mixes with the fear of caring for a premature baby in the home. Nursing must develop strategies to involve parents early in the care of their children during hospitalization
25	Raines (2013)	Mothers' stressors as the day of discharge from the NNU approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Quantitative</li> <li>ii. Descriptive study</li> <li>iii. Survey PSS-NICU)</li> </ul>	105 surveys Country: USA	To determine the occurrence of stress and the areas of stress	All mothers in the study reported experiencing stress related to their infants' anticipated discharge, with

			iv. Descriptive statistics, frequency distributions and measures of central tendency (varimax rotation). Overall followed the stress occurrence Metric 1 (Miles et al) – increases clinical sensitivity of the instrument by only scoring items experienced by parent		experienced by mothers as they prepare for their infant's transition from the neonatal unit to home setting	extremely high levels of stress reported by 34% of participants. This supports the position that nurses provide guidance to mothers that strengthens their parenting role and relationship with their infants
26	Raines (2013)	Preparing for NICU discharge: mothers' concerns	ii. Quantitative iii. Exploratory, cross-sectional survey design iv. Surveys v. Pearson correlations	150 surveys  Country: USA	To quantify mothers' concerns in anticipation of their infant's discharge from the neonatal unit – measure mothers' level of confidence and to explore the relationship between mothers' self-perceived confidence and level of concern	Mothers express confidence in their ability as a caregiver but expressed concerns about being tired, the need for readmission to the hospital and missing a change in the infant's conditions
27	Saenz Cerda, Diaz, Yi, Gorba, Boronat, Barreto and Vento (2008)	Psychological stress of parents of preterm infants enrolled in an early discharge programme (EDP) from the NICU: a prospective randomised trial	i. qualitative ii. prospective randomised trial iii. surveys and interview parents iv. parents evaluated using hospital anxiety and depression scale (HAD), Likert scale for wellbeing, interview to assess parental narrative of worrying and helping issues	EDP= 72, SDP=68  Country: Spain	To evaluate parental psychological stress in an EDP for the first 3 months after neonatal unit discharge	Vulnerability of parents enrolled in an EDP did not increase after hospital discharge. Physical well-being of the baby was the most important issue for both groups. EDP parents requested less paediatric support and scored higher in the well-being verbatim.
28	Phillips-Pula, Pickler, McGrath, Brown and Dusing (2013)	Caring for a Preterm Infant at Home: A Mother's Perspective	ii. Qualitative iii. Transcendental-phenomenological study iv. interview (over 4 months period) iv. Moustakas method and Epoche process	8 mothers, given birth to a singleton infant born between 24-34 weeks' gestation  Country: USA	To examine the experiences of mothers of preterm infants during the first 6 month at home following discharge from a neonatal unit	Mothers' feelings: fear of the unknown, exhaustion, determination, thankfulness
29	Toral-Lopez, Fernández-Alcántara, González-Carrión, Cruz-Quintana, Rivas-Campos and	Needs perceived by parents of preterm infants: integrating care into the early discharge process	i. qualitative ii. descriptive study iii. semi-structured interviews iv. thematic analysis with Atlas.ti 6.2 software	23 parents  Country: Spain	To identify experiences and obstacles, during hospitalization and after discharge, of fathers and mothers of preterm infants who did or did not	Parents considered early discharge programs to be very useful in addressing the emotional aspects of hospitalization and the acquisition of neonatal care skills. Parents claim that the coordination and the

	Pérez-Marfil (2015)				participate in an early discharge program	information provided should be improved
30	Zamanzadeh, Namnabati, Valizadeh and Badiee (2013)	Mothers' experiences of infants' discharge in Iranian NICU culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Qualitative</li> <li>ii. Descriptive study</li> <li>iii. interviews</li> <li>iv. MAXQDA 2010 (coding and categorizing)</li> </ul>	<p>16 mothers</p> <p>Country: Iran</p>	To examine mothers' experiences of the preparation of their infants for discharge in an Iranian neonatal unit	Highlight 4 themes regarding mothers' experiences of infants' discharge plan: learning from multiple sources, conditional discharge, enabled mother and continued nightmares.