The purpose of this integrative literature review is to use current research to examine burnout in neonatal nurses and effective coping strategies that are being used.

Background:
Neonatal nurses care for newborns that may experience a number of problems such as being born prematurely, having birth defects, cardiac malformations, or those that develop illness shortly after birth ("What is Neonatal Nursing," n.d.). Typically, the neonate period is considered the first month after birth, but neonatal nurses may care for children up to the age of two ("What is Neonatal Nursing," n.d.). The nurses in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) become caregivers for the babies, as well as support for the families of the babies.

Burnout is the "response to workplace stress that results in emotional and mental exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased sense of personal accomplishment" (Braithwaite, 2008). This feeling of burnout may cause nurses to distance themselves from the NICU, change specialties, experience burnout such as continuing educations, talking to colleagues, adopting a healthy lifestyle, or finding a supportive environment (i.e. mentoring programs, support from other nurses or physicians), helps provide relief while at work. Education activities that promote professional growth and development (i.e. continuing education, involvement in professional organizations, leadership activities) helped decrease the feeling of burnout. Reflective practices include activities such as counseling, support groups, debriefing sessions, mindfulness-based stress reduction, relaxation techniques, and participation in bereavement interventions.

Research Questions:
What coping strategies are effective in addressing burnout neonatal nurses?

Results & Discussion:
Six studies examined the relationship between coping strategies and burnout in neonatal nurses. Several strategies emerged from the the literature as effective for coping with burnout.

Within the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), self-maintenance is essential to reduce symptoms of burnout. Nurses reported that a healthy lifestyle (diet, exercise, relaxing), recreational diversions and spiritual recalibrations were effective ways to diminish burnout. A positive environment, both social and at work, also impacts a nurse’s well-being. Talking to other nurses, using humor to diffuse intense emotions, taking breaks, supportive environment (i.e. mentoring programs, support from other nurses or physicians), helps provide relief while at work.

Nursing Practice Implications:
Nurse burnout in the NICU should be addressed in an effort to reduce the resultant negative consequences that can occur. In the NICU, neonates are completely dependent on the care provided by nurses therefore errors that result from the effects of burnout can have devastating effects. It is up to nurses, nursing administrators, and the place of employment to take the necessary steps to prevent burnout. Establishing effective coping mechanisms for dealing with burnout will help the nurses and everyone around them. Nurses should implement strategies to reduce burnout such as continuing educations, talking to colleagues, adopting a healthy lifestyle, or finding a spiritual group.