

Neonates - Management of Procedure - Related Pain

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Functional Sub group Clinical/ Patient Services - Maternity
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Summary There is high level evidence that neonates do feel pain and respond physiologically, and that this can have both short and long term adverse effects. A number of simple interventions such as breastfeeding, swaddling and sucrose during procedures such as heel lance or insertion of intravenous line can prevent neonatal pain. There is also evidence for the best forms of analgesia for more complex procedures.

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Applies to Area Health Services/Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporation, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations - Non Declared, Affiliated Health Organisations - Declared, Divisions of General Practice, NSW Ambulance Service, NSW Dept of Health, Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres, Public Hospitals

Audience Maternity, Emergency Depts, Paediatrics, Pathology, Early Childhood Centres, Neonatal Intensive Care

Distributed to Public Health System, Community Health Centres, Divisions of General Practice, NSW Ambulance Service, NSW Department of Health, Public Hospitals, Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres

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Director-General

Compliance with this policy directive is mandatory.

NEONATES – MANAGEMENT OF PROCEDURE-RELATED PAIN

This Policy Directive is based on the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) 2005 Guideline Statement: Management of Procedure-related Pain in Neonates Paediatrics & Child Health Division, RACP.

The complete guideline is available at <http://www.racp.edu.au/hpu/paed/pain/index.htm>.

The neonatal period is the first 28 completed days of life¹.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Area Health Services are required to have a guideline for the management of procedure related pain in neonates based upon the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) Guideline Statement: Management of Procedure-related Pain in neonates.
- 1.2 The Paediatric and Child Health Division of the RACP have developed an evidence-based guideline indicating the need to manage procedure-related pain in neonates.
- 1.3 The Maternal and Perinatal Health Priority Taskforce recommends that the NSW Department of Health endorse the RACP guideline for the management of procedure-related pain in neonates.

2. Pain in neonates is often unrecognised and under treated

- 2.1 There is abundant high-level evidence that neonates feel pain and respond physiologically. Analgesia should be prescribed when indicated during medical care. Neonatal pain can have both short and long term adverse effects. A number of simple interventions such as breastfeeding, swaddling and sucrose during procedures such as heel lancet and insertion of an intravenous cannula can prevent neonatal pain.
- 2.2 The appropriate use of environmental, behavioral and pharmacological interventions can prevent, reduce or eliminate neonatal pain in many clinical situations. A lack of behavioral responses does not necessarily indicate a lack of pain.

3. Principles of management of pain in neonates

- 3.1 Prevention – consider whether each test / intervention is necessary.
- 3.2 Environment – reduce stress from noxious stimuli (acoustic, visual, tactile, vestibule).
- 3.3 Behavioral methods – breastfeeding, glucose/sucrose, non-nutritive sucking, swaddling, multisensory stimulation (multisensory stimulation may

¹ NSW Health NSW Mothers and Babies 2004 NSW Public Health Bulletin Volume 16 Number S-4 2005

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include the use of massage, speaking with a soothing voice and providing eye contact).

- 3.4 Pharmacological agents – for pre-emptive analgesia.
- 3.5 Pharmacological therapy for ongoing pain.

4. Implementation

- 4.1 The Australian and New Zealand Neonatal Network (ANZNN) has received two years funding from the National Institute for Clinical Studies (NICS) to implement the evidence.
- 4.2 In NSW, ANZNN is based at the NSW Pregnancy and Newborn Services Network (PSN).
- 4.3 PSN are available to assist Area Health Services with the development of local guidelines and implementation issues and can be contacted on 02 9351 7318.

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Director-General