The Impact of Therapeutic Neonatal Positioning in the NICU

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Background

- Neonatal Positioning is essential to receiving optimal comfort and is a standard of care.
- Important for premature babies.
- Lack of proper positioning can later influence crawling, walking, sitting, and balancing on their own.
- Skin is prone to breakdown regardless of age.
- Ischemia can set in after too long in one position.
- Standard of care is to be reposition every 3-4 hours with cares.
- Promotes growth and development.

(Mark, 2020) (Larkin et al., 2019) (Marcellus, 2004)
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Guidelines

• 1992: Keep babies on their backs for sleeping to reduce SIDS
  • This led to 50% fewer deaths

• 2020: back to sleep with no swaddling.
  • Advised not to sleep on sides or stomach.

Negative Effect:
• Delay in infant motor development milestones
• Cranial asymmetry has increased by about 46.6% most recently.

(AAP, 2020) (Zachry et al., 2017).
Literature Review

Study #1
Quantitative study with descriptive statistics

Setting: 75-bed NICU

Intervention: Nurses and therapists were educated on positioning.

Purpose: Thoughts and preferences of each professional were compared.

Survey was sent to 242 neonatal nurses, 16 therapists (speech, occupational, and physical) on what they thought was valuable about positioning neonates and which positioning aid they preferred.

Results: There was a 99% agreement that positioning is important for neonates.

Study #2
Quality Improvement (QI) project done at a tertiary center in a 22-bed Level III NICU from Sept. 2014 – March 2016.

Purpose: Observe correlation between nurses being continuously educated on positioning and increasing IPAT scores

Educational components: educational sessions, hands-on skills lab, PowerPoint presentations, detailed video, online module, simulations one-on-one with a mannequin to run through scenarios.

After education, staff performed IPAT over 3 cycles and gathered a cumulative score.

Limitation: No positioning aids available

Results: The IPAT score increased, but they did not reach a therapeutic score of a 9.

(Zarem et al., 2013) (Charafeddine et al., 2018)
Purpose/Aim

Promote rest periods of 2-3 hours and maximize comfort.

- Neonates require a quiet environment.
- Literature supports nurses being educated on positioning neonates.

Research Questions

1. Is there a difference in therapeutic neonatal positioning scores with the use of a positioning aid after implementing a nursing educational intervention?
2. Is there a relationship between neonatal positioning and select neonatal demographics?

(Zarem, et al., 2013)
Methods/Approach

Quasi-experimental Study Jan. 2022 – March 2022 14-bed Level III NICU

- Measured neonatal positioning pre and post use of a positioning aid and the tool used was the IPAT.
- Educational was provided prior to the start of the study.
  - Educational component for RNs of NICU (two in person sessions and one mass email)
  - Education on how to use positioners, refresher on positioning, information on care for development and IPAT scoring was explained.

**Goal:** Post-mean score of 9 or higher for therapeutic positioning

**Convenience sampling**  **Power analysis:** 28  **Goal sample size:** 35

**Inclusion Criteria:** All babies admitted to the NICU

**Exclusion Criteria:** Babies on pain medication or an oscillator
Instrument

Infant Positioning Assessment Tool (IPAT)

- Developed by Philips – validity and reliability confirmed
- Permission was obtained to use this tool.
- Assessed extremities and body alignment of neonates
- Six items: head, neck, shoulders, hands, hip/pelvis, and knees/ankle/feet measured 0, 1, 2.
  - Two is reflective of therapeutic positioning
  - Zero is inadequate positioning
- Pre- and post-positioning (2 scores per baby)

(Philips, 2018)
Results

- Final sample size (n=31)

- Descriptive statistics performed for the pre vs. post mean/SD.

- Goal of a post-mean >9 was achieved!

Table 2

Analysis of Differences in Pre- and Post-Test Scores (N = 31) on the Infant Positioning Assessment Tool (IPAT) before and after Use of Positioning Aids

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1- Head</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.619</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>-7.470</td>
<td>30  &lt;.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2- Neck</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.657</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>-5.064</td>
<td>30  &lt;.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3- Shoulders</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.680</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>.301</td>
<td>-7.325</td>
<td>30  &lt;.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4- Hands</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.746</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>-4.491</td>
<td>30  &lt;.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5- Hips</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.806</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>-5.387</td>
<td>30  &lt;.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6- Knees</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td>-5.387</td>
<td>30  &lt;.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>3.185</td>
<td>10.71</td>
<td>1.346</td>
<td>-8.974</td>
<td>30  &lt;.001**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Score item 0= non-therapeutic, 1= somewhat therapeutic, 2= therapeutic positioning, maximum total score = 12. p<.05* level of significance, p<.01**
Demographics

- Multivariate analysis revealed that there is no correlation between demographics and the post-mean total IPAT scores.

- Handmade blanket rolls by the RN’s were the most used positioning aid.

- Linear regression (shown below) shows that there is a correlation between gestational age being a predictor of weight.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Demographics on IPAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gestational Age</td>
<td>248.42</td>
<td>27.238</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(180 days – 291 days)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Positioning Aid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket Rolls</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halo Sack</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaddled</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket &amp; Bean Bag</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket Roll/Bean Bag/Gel Pillow</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bean Bag/DandleROO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bean Bag/Halo Sac</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DandleROO/Gel Pillow</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linear Regression Model Predicting Weight at Birth</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Standard Error B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gestational Age</td>
<td>29.291</td>
<td>3.649</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent</td>
<td>-4816.463</td>
<td>911.783</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²=0.69 (p&lt;0.001)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weight (925 grams – 5000 grams)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery Method</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Standard Error B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaginal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-section</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

• Increased HCP awareness on therapeutic positioning

• Educated on positioning aids and development

• Increased opportunities for positive development of neonates

• IPAT provided a visual for therapeutic positioning
Implication for practice

- Positioning should remain a standard of care
- Continuing education on positioners and positioning for positive developmental progress
- Positioning champion on the unit.
References


References


• Safe sleep and your baby: how parents can reduce the risk of SIDS and suffocation. AAP. (2020). In *healthychildren.org*. url: https://patiented.solutions.aap.org/handout.aspx?gbosid=156543


Acknowledgements

I would really like to thank everyone who supported me in my journey to this outcome and my first research project.

• Dr. Annette Callis (Vanguard Thesis Advisor) for being with me every step of the way.
• Dr. Trisha Saul for guiding me along and keeping me on track
• My co-workers for participating voluntarily and helping me reach my goal!
• My family and boyfriend for praying for me and helping keep me sane in the process!
Questions?

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