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Section on Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine

ARTICLES OF INTEREST – March 2024

Childhood outcomes after maternal antenatal sildenafil treatment for severe early-onset fetal growth restriction: a randomized trial (STRIDER NZAus)
Christopher J D McKinlay, Chad Anderson, Jeanie L Y Cheong, et al. *J Perinatol.*

This study is a follow-up at 2.5 years of children from the STRIDER NZAus Trial (N = 112) in which women with singleton pregnancies affected by severe early fetal growth restriction were randomized to receive sildenafil citrate or placebo until 32 weeks. The authors found that there was no difference between groups in survival without neurosensory impairment (cerebral palsy, deafness, blindness, cognitive delay (Bayley III cognition or language score >1 SD below mean) or motor delay: 30/56[54%] vs. 34/56[61%]; aOR = 0.74, 95%CI: 0.31, 1.77). However, children exposed to sildenafil appeared to be more likely to have cognitive delay (13/45[29%] vs. 4/40[10%]; aOR = 3.71, 95% CI: 1.01, 13.63) but less likely to have emotional-behavioural difficulties (2/43[5%] vs. 8/38[21%]; aOR = 0.19, 95%CI: 0.03, 1.00).

Early feeding for the prevention of neonatal hypoglycaemia: a systematic review and meta-analysis.
Lily F Roberts, Jane E Harding, Caroline A Crowther, et al. *Neonatology.*

This meta-analysis included a total of 175,392 participants from 19 studies, of which two were RCTs, 14 cohort studies, two cross-sectional studies, and one a case-control study. Most studies (13/19) were conducted in low- or lower-middle-income countries. Early feeding may be associated with reduced neonatal hypoglycemia (four cohort studies, 744 infants, odds ratio [OR] 0.19 (95% CI: 0.10-0.35), p<0.00001, I squared = 44%) and slightly reduced duration of initial hospital stay (one cohort study, 1,673 infants, mean difference: -0.20 days [95% CI: -0.31 to -0.09], p = 0.0003), but the evidence is very uncertain. One RCT found early feeding had little or no effect on the risk of neonatal mortality, but three cohort studies found early feeding may be associated with reduced risk (136,468 infants, OR 0.51 [95% CI: 0.37-0.72]; low certainty evidence; p<0.0001; I squared = 54%). The authors concluded that early feeding may reduce the incidence of neonatal hypoglycemia, but the evidence is very uncertain.

Oral administration of bone marrow-derived mesenchymal stem cells attenuates intestinal injury in necrotizing enterocolitis
Yeong Seok Lee, Yong Hoon Jun, Juyoung Lee, et al. *Clin Exp Pediatr.*

This study aimed to determine the optimal dose of intraperitoneally administered bone marrow-derived mesenchymal stem cells (BM-MSCs) and investigate the therapeutic potential of orally administered BM-MSCs in necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC). On day 3, the neonatal mice were randomly divided into control, negative control, and BM-MSC-treated groups. High-dose (1x106 cells) or low-dose (1x105 cells) BM-MSCs were administered intraperitoneally 1 or 3 times between days 6 and 8 to treat the NEC. The orally administered group received a low dose of BM-MSCs on day 6. Tissue injury, apoptosis, and inflammatory marker levels were significantly reduced after BM-MSC administration. Oral administration was as effective as intraperitoneal administration, even at a low dose (1x105 cells) of BM-MSCs. The efficacy of high (1x106 cells) or multiple divided doses of BM-MSCs did not differ from that of low-dose treatment. The oral administration of BM-MSCs is a promising treatment option for NEC in infants. Further human studies of BM-MSCs are necessary to determine the optimal dose required to achieve safe and effective outcomes.

Evaluating the safety and efficacy of erythropoietin therapy for neonatal hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy: a systematic review and meta-analysis
Shayan Marsia, Danisha Kumar, Hamna Raheel, et al. *Pediatr Neurol.*

Multiple studies have linked the use of Erythropoietin (EPO) for hypoxic-ischemia encephalopathy (HIE), either as a monotherapy or in conjunction with therapeutic hypothermia (TH), with improved neonatal outcomes including death and neurodisability. However, there is also evidence in the literature that raises concerns about its efficacy and safety for the treatment of neonatal encephalopathy (NE). Seven studies with 903 infants with the diagnosis of NE were included in our meta-analysis. EPO did not reduce the risk of death or neurodisability (risk ratio 0.68 [95% confidence interval [CI]: 0.43 to 1.09]) (P = 0.11). Similarly, the risk of cerebral palsy was not reduced by the administration of EPO (risk ratio 0.68 [95% CI: 0.33 to 1.40]) (P = 0.30). The results do not support the use of EPO for the treatment of neonatal encephalopathy.

Advice to clinicians from expectant parents at extreme prematurity: a multimethod study
Anne Sullivan, Bonnie Arzuaga, Donna Luff, et al. *Pediatrics.*

In this study, the authors aimed to determine empirical, parent-derived recommendations and advice for clinicians counseling on extreme prematurity. Pregnant women (and their partners) admitted at 22 0/7 to 25 6/7 weeks' estimated gestation participated in postantenatal counseling semi-structured interviews or questionnaires to explore parental preferences in the counseling process, including advice to clinicians. Parental recommendations related to compassionately engaging, supporting, and communicating with families, as well as aligning teams and following up. The authors present an empirical parent-derived, family-centered, and practical approach for clinicians counseling on extreme prematurity. Future studies should include a more diverse patient population and assess the impact of these recommendations on the counseling process and outcomes.

Disparities in racial, ethnic, and payer groups for pediatric safety events in US hospitals
Kavita Parikh, Matt Hall, Joel S Tieder, et al. *Pediatrics.*

The authors analyzed a national sample of hospitalizations to identify disparities in safety events. In this population-based, retrospective cohort study of the 2019 Kids' Inpatient Database, independent variables were race, ethnicity, and payer. Outcomes were Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality pediatric safety indicators (PDIs). Risk-adjusted odds ratios were calculated using white and private payer reference groups. Differences by payer were evaluated by stratifying race and ethnicity. Compared with white patients, Black and Hispanic patients had significantly greater odds in 5 of 7 PDIs. Compared with privately insured patients, Medicaid-covered patients had significantly greater odds in 4 of 7 PDIs. Stratified analyses demonstrated persistent disparities by race and ethnicity, even among privately insured children. Disparities in safety events were identified for Black and Hispanic children, indicating a need for targeted interventions to improve patient safety in the hospital.

Outcomes by disease onset, sex, and intervention in neonates with SIP and surgical NEC
Parvesh Mohan Garg, Katheryn Lett, Md Abu Yusuf Ansari, et al. *Pediatr Res.*

This is a retrospective single-center study to identify outcomes among a cohort of infants for surgical NEC and spontaneous intestinal perforation (SIP) categorized by the age of onset, interventions, and sex. Infants with NEC/SIP onset >20 days had significantly lower odds of small bowel involvement and higher necrosis than onset <10 days. Initial laparotomy was associated with more bowel loss, small and large intestine involvement, and ileocecal valve resection than initial PD therapy. Females underwent fewer small bowel resections but had higher surgical morbidity than males. This study brings to light a possible developmental pattern for risk of intestinal injury depending on the gestational age and age of disease onset.

The effect of oropharyngeal mother's milk on nutritional outcomes in preterm infants: a randomized controlled trial
Fatemeh Kelich, Mojtaba Qanbari Qalehsari, Ali Zabihi, et al. *BMC Pediatr.*

This is an RCT that assessed infants receiving breastmilk (BM; intervention) versus sterile water (placebo) at 48 to 72 hours after birth for infants born between 25 to 31 weeks gestational age. The intervention was to administer 1ml of BM or sterile water using an insulin syringe every 2 hours and the intervention ended if the infant was able to receive this volume for three consecutive meals. The study results showed that the time to start enteral nutrition in the intervention group was lower than in the control group (P = 0.012). Also, the mean volume of milk received by mouth at the time of discharge were higher in the intervention group and the length of stay was lower in the intervention group.

RSV prefusion f protein–based maternal vaccine — preterm birth and other outcomes
Ilse Dieussaert, Joon Hyung Kim, Sabine Luik, et al. *N Engl J Med.*

This is a phase 3 trial involving pregnant women 18 to 49 years of age to assess the efficacy and safety of a candidate RSV prefusion F protein–based maternal vaccine (RSVPreF3-Mat). The women were randomly assigned in a 2:1 ratio to receive RSVPreF3-Mat or placebo between 24 weeks 0 days and 34 weeks 0 days of gestation. The primary outcomes were any or severe medically assessed RSV-associated lower respiratory tract disease in infants from birth to 6 months of age and safety in infants from birth to 12 months of age. The target enrollment was not reached because enrollment was stopped early. A total of 3426 infants in the vaccine group

and 1711 infants in the placebo group were followed from birth to 6 months of age; vaccine efficacy ranged between 65.5% to 69.0%. Preterm birth occurred in 6.8% of the infants (237 of 3494) in the vaccine group and in 4.9% of those (86 of 1739) in the placebo group (relative risk, 1.37; 95% confidence interval [CI], 1.08 to 1.74; P=0.01). The results of this trial, in which enrollment was stopped early because of safety concerns, suggest that the risks of any and severe medically assessed RSV-associated lower respiratory tract disease among infants were lower with the candidate maternal RSV vaccine than with placebo but that the risk of preterm birth was higher with the candidate vaccine.

Effect of early vs late inguinal hernia repair on serious adverse event rates in preterm infants: a randomized clinical trial
HIP Trial Investigators; Martin L Blakely, Andrea Krzyzaniak, Melvin S Dassinger, et al. *JAMA.*

A multicenter randomized clinical trial randomizing preterm infants with inguinal hernia diagnosed during initial hospitalization to early or late repair. In the early repair strategy, infants underwent inguinal hernia repair before neonatal intensive care unit discharge. In the late repair strategy, hernia repair was planned after discharge from the neonatal intensive care unit and when the infants were older than 55 weeks' postmenstrual age. The primary outcome was occurrence of any prespecified serious adverse event during the 10-month observation period (determined by a blinded adjudication committee). The secondary outcomes included the total number of days in the hospital during the 10-month observation period. 338 infants were randomized (172 in the early and 166 in the late repair group), 320 underwent operative repair; the mean gestational age at birth was 26.6 weeks; the mean postnatal age at enrollment was 12 weeks. 44 (28%) in the early repair group vs 27 (18%) in the late repair group had at least 1 serious adverse event (risk difference, −7.9% [95% credible interval, −16.9% to 0%]. The median number of days in the hospital during the 10-month observation period was 19.0 days (IQR, 9.8 to 35.0 days) in the early repair group vs 16.0 days (IQR, 7.0 to 38.0 days) in the late repair group. The results of this trials suggests that among preterm infants with inguinal hernia, the late repair strategy resulted in fewer infants having at least 1 serious adverse event.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY PUBLICATIONS – March 2024

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Congenital diaphragmatic hernia: phosphodiesterase-5 and Arginase inhibitors prevent pulmonary vascular hypoplasia in rat lungs
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Values of serum intestinal fatty acid-binding protein, fecal calprotectin, and fecal human β-defensin 2 for predicting necrotizing enterocolitis
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RSV prefusion f protein–based maternal vaccine — preterm birth and other outcomes
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Prenatal diagnosis of ductus arteriosus anomalies: a single-center study
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Disruption of cerebellar granular layer as a consequence of germinal matrix intraventricular hemorrhage in extreme prematurity: an acute direct mechanism too?
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Performance of febrile infant decision tools on hypothermic infants evaluated for infection
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The sensitivity and specificity of procalcitonin in diagnosing bacterial sepsis in neonates
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BASIC SCIENCE SELECTIONS

Investigation of the miRNA-mRNA regulatory circuits and immune signatures associated with bronchopulmonary dysplasia
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/38476468
In utero ventilation induces lung parenchymal and vascular alterations in extremely preterm fetal sheep
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Postnatal steroids as lung protective and anti-inflammatory in preterm lambs exposed to antenatal inflammation
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Glutaredoxin-1 modulates the NF-kappaB signaling pathway to activate inducible nitric oxide synthase in experimental necrotizing enterocolitis
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/38496303
Evaluation of the protective and therapeutic effects of extra virgin olive oil rich in phenol in experimental model of neonatal necrotizing enterocolitis by clinical disease score, inflammation, apoptosis, and oxidative stress markers
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miR-375-3p targets YWHAB to attenuate intestine injury in neonatal necrotizing enterocolitis
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/38431920
Oral administration of bone marrow-derived mesenchymal stem cells attenuates intestinal injury in necrotizing enterocolitis
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Oligodendrocyte progenitor cells' fate after neonatal asphyxia-Puzzling implications for the development of hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy
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https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/37963514

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Mitochondrial DNA mutations in extremely preterm infants with bronchopulmonary dysplasia
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/38432533
Effects of bradycardia, hypoxemia and early intubation on bronchopulmonary dysplasia in very preterm infants: An observational study
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Diuretics use in the management of bronchopulmonary dysplasia in preterm infants: A systematic review
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