



Comforting babies in pain

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BC Children's TeamWorks,
January 13, 2010.

Submitted by Sharron Lyons

Babies feel pain, but how are health care providers managing that pain during a procedure? Literature shows that pain associated with acute care procedures in infants and children is often managed poorly.

B.C. Children's and B.C. Women's is one of eight centres across Canada in a national study about pain assessment and management in infants and children. CFRI members Drs. Anne Synnes and Fay Warnock are the site investigators

for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research study.

B.C. Children's inpatient units 3M and 3R are control groups. PICU and NICU are intervention units, where a pain practice change is introduced and evaluated.

"We're helping the NICU staff and families provide non-pharmacologic comfort measures to infants during routine painful procedures, including heel pricks for collecting blood, starting IVs and having a breathing tube in the airway," says Alison Drummond, Research Nurse. "Babies lack the ability to comfort themselves, so these procedures cause pain and leave them

disoriented. Comfort measures like providing skin-to-skin care, a soother, or facilitated tucking—which is placing still hands on the infant's head and torso with gentle but firm pressure—can keep babies calm".

The research team also works with lab staff to ensure nurses or family members can use the comfort measures before, during and after a blood collection. This collaboration is vital to the research.

"Through knowledge sharing," says Alison, "we're supporting care providers to improve their pain management practice by using tools that research has shown to be effective in decreasing infants' discomfort."

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