

UK PICU Staffing Study

The impact of changing workforce patterns in UK paediatric intensive care services
on staff practice and patient outcomes
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A project funded by the NHS R&D Service Delivery and Organisation programme, allied to PICANet. The Paediatric Intensive Care Audit Network (PICANet) is a national audit (coordinated by the Universities of Leeds and Leicester) which collects data on all children admitted to paediatric intensive care units (PICUs) in England, Wales and Scotland

Progress Update

As you may recall, this study aims to test the impact of changing workforce patterns (or *who* cares for patients) on staff and patients in UK Paediatric Intensive Care Units (PICUs). It is taking place in 12 participating PICUs, comparing outcomes between 6 units with to 6 units without extended nursing roles (ie. nurses undertaking clinical tasks normally outwith normal nursing practice).

COREC approval was received for the study in August 2006 (Ref: 06/MRE04/50).

The study involves 3 phases:

Phase 1 - completed

This phase collected detailed staffing information about all PICUs in the UK to explore differences in roles and skillmix of nurses and medical staff. Data was used to divide the units into two groups; those with and without nurses undertaking extended tasks and roles. We then randomly selected six units from each group and invited them to take part in Phase 2 of the study. All 12 units agreed to participate.

Phase 2 - completed

A researcher visited the participating units to build a unit profile, detailed workforce description and to interview key staff. This part of the study also involved observing nursing staff as they worked on a typical shift, and unit staff were invited to complete a short activity summary at the end of each observed shift. All the data we collected in phase 2 provided important information on the nursing roles and how the team works together in each unit.



Phase 3

This final stage of the study is now well underway in all 12 units and due to be completed in Spring 2008. This is a year-long prospective study of staffing and throughput on the units in relation to outcomes for patients. One outcome of interest is probable ventilator associated pneumonia (VAP). Finally, there will be a postal survey of staff views and well-being which will be sent to the 12 participating units in September 2007.

For more information about the project please see under "research projects" on PICANet website at <http://www.picanet.org.uk/>

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