

UK PICU Staffing Study

The impact of changing workforce patterns in UK paediatric intensive care services
on staff practice and patient outcomes
NEWSLETTER 2 (January 2006)

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, Leicester and Sheffield) which collects data on all children admitted to paediatric intensive care units (PICUs) in England, Wales and Scotland:

OVER 90% RESPONSE TO THE STAFFING CENSUS

And ...the main study

There has been an excellent response to the telephone census from PICANet units. This first phase surveyed staffing and skillmix in all UK paediatric intensive care units. From the census we will have a contemporary picture of nurse and medical staffing provision in the units. We also collected information about extended nursing roles and variation in clinical tasks undertaken by nurses in PICUs.

The key difference anticipated between units is in workforce configurations and the roles and skillmix of nurses and medical staffing in some PICUs. The main findings from the census will be circulated in the next newsletter in Spring/Summer 2006.

What happens next?

The pilot study

During the pilot study later this year we will invite a small number of units to host site-visits by a researcher. The purpose is to interview nurse managers about staffing, staff development and recruitment. It will also explore how occupancy and staffing are monitored and pilot end-of-shift activity diaries with nurses.

Information from the literature, current practice and this pilot study will be used to develop a simple shift-by-shift staff/patient log for the main study.

In the main prospective part of the study (winter 2006) 12 PICUs will be invited to take part, according to staffing and skillmix configuration. We have a small amount of funding to help support units in this 12-month phase. The staff/patient log will collect shift-by-shift information about staff giving clinical care and about patients in the unit. The study aims to determine the impact of different workforce patterns and skillmix on staff practice and patient outcomes in Paediatric Intensive Care Units in the UK.

Outcome measures are:

- risk-adjusted length of stay, unplanned re-admission; adverse events; healthcare-associated infections;
- and children and parents' experience of care.

In addition we plan to survey the wellbeing of staff working in PICUs, exploring work pressures, team working and job satisfaction.

What are we doing now?

We are currently seeking ethical approval for the study and analysing the staffing census data. Congratulations and good wishes to Nicky Davey (nurse adviser at PICANet Leicester) who is taking up a new post as Neonatal and Paediatric Transport Coordinator. For more information about the Research Team please see overleaf. If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact us.

The UK PICU Staffing Study Group

Investigators

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