



Letter to the Editor

Perception and knowledge of nursing professionals on screening of congenital heart disease in newborns

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Dear Editor,

Pulse oximetry (PO) combined with clinical examination is a cost-effective and sensitive screening tool for congenital heart diseases (CHDs) in the newborn period. CHD screening with PO, along with clinical examination, is not universally implemented in India. There are few studies on the role of combined screening of CHD in term newborns, but there are no studies on the perceptions of nursing professionals of the same. For developing a national recommendation on screening and implementation by integration into the mainstream, the perception and knowledge of nursing professionals about the basics of screening and its limitations is important as they are responsible for performing, interpreting, and documenting screening as well as educating and counselling parents to ensure follow-up.^[1-3] This study was done with the objective of assessing the knowledge and perception of nursing professionals on CHD screening of term newborns.

A total of 1009 term newborns underwent combined screening for CHD in a tertiary care hospital. To assess the knowledge and perception of nurses on CHD screening, a survey was done by the investigator administered a questionnaire to nurses working in the paediatric ward, post-natal ward and neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Informed consent was obtained from parents before initial screening. The Institutional Ethical Committee approval was taken for the study.

Forty-four nurses working in the paediatric ward, post-natal ward, paediatric intensive care unit and NICU participated in the study. About 93.2% felt that it was easy to convince parents of PO screening. About 95.4% knew that PO screening could not detect all forms of CHD, 88.6% knew optimal timing, 97.7% knew about the correct sites for screening, 100% of them knew about factors that affect pulse ox reading, and 95.4% were aware of interpretation of pulse ox readings to consider as screen positive and report. About 100% of them agreed that combined screening with clinical examination and PO is the best screening method for CHD, and PO screening is worth doing, cost-effective, non-invasive and easy.

Ethical approval: The research/study approved by Institutional ethical committee ref no JSS/MC/IEC/21/5047/2015-16 dated 9th November 2015.

Declaration of patient consent: The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate parents consent to screen the newborns.

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