

Chest Physiotherapy Techniques Used in Neonatal & Paediatric Intensive Care Units in Punjab

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to observe the common chest physiotherapy techniques (CPT) used by physiotherapists in Neonatal and Paediatric Intensive Care Units (NICU & PICU) in the hospitals located in Punjab. The design of the study was exploratory cross sectional survey. Data was collected with the help of standardised questionnaire, which was sent to one hundred thirty therapists who worked in thirty eight different hospitals in Punjab and these hospitals have claimed physiotherapy facilities in their NICU and PICU premises. A period of two weeks was given to the therapists for the completion of questionnaire. If the therapists were not able to send the filled questionnaire within two weeks, then a reminder call was given to them for the next two consecutive weeks. It was found that only eighty-four (i.e. 64.61%) completed questionnaires was received from the twenty five hospitals. It was concluded that percussion, vibration, suctioning, positioning, breathing exercises of CPT techniques were commonly practised in both PICU and NICU.

Key words: ICU, Neonatal, Paediatric, Physiotherapy, Punjab

Introduction

The precise role of the physiotherapists in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) varies considerably from one unit to the other, depending on factors such as the country in which the ICU is located, local tradition, staffing levels, training and expertise. The referral process is one such example of this variation. In some ICU's, physiotherapists assess all patients, whereas in other ICU's patients are seen only after referral from medical staff. Despite the emphasis on multidisciplinary team, the lack of role definition has resulted in many specialist physiotherapy services being subsumed

by other professional groups, mostly nursing staff. In spite of presence of strong evidence base to support the role of physiotherapists in the ICU, it has undermined the importance of providing specialist physiotherapists (*Jithendra et al, 2007*). NICU is a unit that provides high quality skilled care to critically ill neonates by offering facilities for continuous clinical, biochemical and radiological monitoring and use of life support systems with the aim of improving survival of babies (*Fernandez and Mondkar, 1993*). Pediatric intensive care unit is an area within a hospital specialising in the care of critically ill