

Neonatal neurocritical care

Neonatal [neurocritical care](#) is an emerging subspecialty that combines the expertise of critical care medicine and neurology with that of nursing and other providers in an interprofessional team approach to care. Neurocritical care of the neonate has roots in adult and pediatric practice. It has been demonstrated that adults with acute neurologic conditions who are treated in a specialized neurocritical care unit have reduced morbidity and mortality, as well as decreased length of stay, lower costs, and reduced need for neurosurgical procedures. In pediatrics, neurocritical care has focused on various primary and secondary neurologic conditions complicating critical care that also contribute to mortality, morbidity, and duration of hospitalization. However, the concept of neurocritical care as a subspecialty in pediatric practice is still evolving, and evidence demonstrating improved outcomes is lacking. In the neonatal intensive care nursery, neurocritical care is also evolving as a subspecialty concept to address both supportive and preventive care and optimize neurologic outcomes for an at-risk neonatal patient population. To enhance effectiveness of this care approach, nurses must be prepared to appropriately recognize acute changes in neurologic status, implement protocols that specifically address neurologic conditions, and carefully monitor neurologic status to help prevent secondary injury. The complexity of this team approach to brain-focused care has led to the development of a specialized role: the neurocritical care nurse (neonatal intensive care nursery [NICN] nurse). This article will review key concepts related to neonatal neurocritical care and the essential role of nursing. It will also explore the emerging role of the NICN nurse in supporting early recognition and management of at-risk infants in this neonatal subspecialty practice ¹⁾.

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Peloquin S, Carley A, Bonifacio SL, Glass HC. The Neurointensive Care Nursery and Evolving Roles for Nursing. Neonatal Netw. 2016;35(2):87-94. doi: 10.1891/0730-0832.35.2.87. PubMed PMID: 27052983.

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Last update: **2024/06/07 02:59**

