



Dear friends and supporters of EFCNI,

Infant- and family-centred developmental care was very much on our minds this month as new research highlights the benefits of immediate Kangaroo Mother Care. We also discussed which lessons we can learn from how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted families' experiences in the NICU at a conference in Sweden. Meanwhile, our friends at SIMCharacters have welcomed Emily to the team, a new, state-of-the-art simulation doll to help healthcare professionals train for critical care emergencies.

Finally, from April to June, we are asking healthcare professionals, parent representatives, and all other interested stakeholders to contribute their insights and feedback to the 76 individual standards of the European Standards of Care for Newborn Health (ESCNH) currently under review. Share your knowledge with us and help us ensure that the ESCNH continue to represent the best approaches in neonatal care.

Many thanks for your continuous support!

Please stay safe and healthy,

Silke Mader and the EFCNI team

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## EARLY SIGNS OF NEW RSV SURGE

### RSV on the rise in the southern hemisphere

After a turbulent RSV season with overcrowded paediatric clinics in the northern hemisphere, the next wave of infections has now reached southern countries, and RSV infection rates continue to rise steeply. One reason for this current surge might be the so-called "catch-up effect": due to the closure of child care facilities and schools as well as contact bans during the

COVID-19 pandemic, significantly fewer children were infected with RSV the year before last, which is being made up for in this cold season. RSV can occur at any age, but it is particularly significant in infants and young children. Patients at risk include preterm babies and children with pre-existing lung or heart disease. Visit our #LittleLungs campaign page to learn more about how to recognise signs of severe RSV and how to protect babies from infection with the proven hygiene measures.

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## Network



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### NEW PARENT ORGANISATION IN OUR NETWORK

#### Warm welcome to “Frühchen Schweiz”, a new parent organisation from Switzerland

“Frühchen Schweiz” (“Preemies Switzerland”) is a non-profit organisation that advocates for preterm and sick newborns and their parents and represents their needs at the local and national level. Under the motto “together through the preemie path”, they offer parents and family members as well as professionals reliable information, targeted support and promote mutual networking and exchange between those affected. In collaboration with neonatal professionals and through active participation and support in research projects, they work towards improvement at all levels and raise public awareness of preterm birth in Switzerland. Welcome aboard – great to have you with us!

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### EARLY INTERVENTION AND FOLLOW-UP

#### ARNIS organises trainings in the General Movement Assessment (GMA) method in Romania

Between 23 and 26 January 2023, the Romanian Association for Long-Term Hospitalized Newborns (ARNIS) hosted the Prechtl General Movement Assessment (GMA) Method Basic Level Course under the guidance of Dr. Christa Einspieler from the University of Graz, Austria. GMA is a method of evaluating children’s movement repertoire to determine the risk of developing neuromotor or cognitive dysfunctions later in life in order to intervene early through a personalised recovery plan. 30 registered professionals attended the GMA early intervention training to identify the risk of cerebral palsy or cognitive impairment in children affected by preterm birth or those already showing symptoms at birth. The advanced level GMA course will take place from 28 June to 1 July 2023 with professionals who have completed the basic GMA course. ARNIS plans to continue

training in this assessment method, maintaining its leading position at the non-governmental level in the field of early intervention for the very smallest.

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## Science



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### IMMEDIATE KANGAROO MOTHER CARE

#### New study on the benefits of establishing a Mother-Newborn Care Unit in India

In response to the study on the benefits of immediate Kangaroo Mother Care (iKMC) conducted by the World Health Organization, a group of researchers set up a Mother-Newborn Care Unit (MNCU) at Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi, India. The objective was to encourage iKMC and support mothers in taking on an active role in the care of their child from the beginning. Hence, the unit featured rooms equipped with appropriate provisions for both mother and baby: an adult bed, a toilet and bathing area, pantry, and a cubicle for clinical examinations while equipment for level II intensive care was at hand for each newborn. Mothers were treated as integral part of the care team and not seen as visitors. The study found that the time mothers spent with their infants in direct skin-to-skin contact increased significantly, just as breastmilk feeding and breastfeeding rates increased. Overall, rates of infection dropped and mortality risks also decreased.

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### ROUNDTABLE ON NUTRITIONAL UNCERTAINTIES

#### Incorporating parent and patient voices into research and study design

Beyond agreeing that mother's own milk is the optimum feed, nutritional practice for very preterm babies varies widely. As part of the development of a randomised controlled trial (RCT) to address feeding uncertainties in preterm infants, researchers sought the views and prior knowledge of parents and adults born preterm across Europe. For this purpose, researchers, together with the European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI), organised two roundtable discussions about the proposed RCT. The results of these discussions showed strong support for further research but also revealed variation in participants' knowledge about research trials and in information provided to parents during a baby's hospital stay. Researchers note that parental and patient involvement as well as participation in all stages of the research process should be encouraged to improve knowledge of research methods and eventually achieve optimal newborn health.

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#### NEW STUDY OUT

### Evaluating the effectiveness of the “Baby Steps” intervention for parental mental health

Mental health problems during pregnancy and shortly after birth can have severe consequences for parents and children and require interventions to prevent them. Improving the mental health of parents, in turn, is critical to improving health outcomes for the whole family. However, despite recognising the benefits of early intervention and prevention, there is limited evidence regarding the effectiveness of antenatal parenting interventions aimed at encouraging maternal mental health and positive child outcomes. Therefore, a new evaluation was developed to assess the causal effectiveness of the “Baby Steps” programme to analyse its effects on maternal mental health and sensitivity in a quasi-experimental study. The evaluation results are expected to be of interest to researchers, families and policy-makers, and to help improve future health interventions to achieve optimal care for parents and their children.

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## European Standards of Care for Newborn Health



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#### PUBLIC CONSULTATION

### We want to hear from you – 76 individual standards are under review

This year, 76 individual standards of the European Standards of Care for Newborn Health (ESCNH) are undergoing their scheduled revision to ensure that they continue to reflect the state of the art. Between April and June, we are conducting a public consultation and invite healthcare professionals, parent representatives, and all other stakeholders to review the standards in question. Share your expertise with us and help us improve the quality of the ESCNH.

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#### CONGRATULATIONS!

### Björn Westrup was honoured with The Stan and Mavis Gravens Award 2023

We congratulate Dr. Björn Westrup on The Stan and Mavis Gravens Award 2023! Dr. Westrup was awarded for leadership

in enhancing the physical and developmental environment for high-risk infants and their families. Besides being a senior consultant in neonatology, he is Director of the Scandinavian NIDCAP Training and Research Center and lecturer at Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden. The NIDCAP approach is a research evidence-based system, supporting the neurodevelopment of hospitalised prematurely born or otherwise medically at high-risk infants. As a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of EFCNI, member of the GLANCE Chair Committee and former chair of the European Standards of Care for Newborn Health (ESCNH), he has supported our foundation in many ways. His achievements are a big inspiration, and we are proud to have such an engaged, competent and encouraging supporter in our network! Learn more about NIDCAP in one of our Lighthouse Projects.

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## NEW TRANSLATION

### The topic of “NICU Design” is now available in Slovakian

Congratulations to our partner parent organisation malíček who have translated all standards belonging to the topic “NICU Design”. Translations are a critical step in the path towards implementing the European Standards of Care for Newborn Health (ESCNH) because they make the ESCNH accessible to a wider group of people and allow for more voices to join the conversation about how to organise high-quality newborn care. Veľká vďaka to everyone involved in the project!

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## SIMULATION TRAINING

### Welcome, Emily! New realistic doll for training in neonatology unveiled

Healthcare professionals working in neonatal care need to continuously hone their skills through training and education. In recent years, simulation scenarios have become more important in training courses because they allow professionals to practice for critical care emergencies in extremely realistic settings and improve their behavioural, technical, and cognitive skills. SIMCharacters, founded by the neonatologist Dr. Jens-Christian Schwindt, has specialised in developing life-like dolls of preterm infants, to be used in training and simulation settings. Earlier this year, they unveiled Emily, their most realistic and technologically most advanced patient simulator. Congratulations!

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## Thermoregulation in preterm born babies



**4 out of 10** babies still arrive cold into the NICU<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>European Society of Neonatology (ESN) & The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) 2019. Hypothermia: a global problem for the newborn baby. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hypothermia>



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## THERMOREGULATION

### 4 out of 10 infants still arrive cold in the NICU

Temperature management is an important aspect of newborn care, particularly when it comes to hospitalised or preterm infants. This patient group often struggles with maintaining a body temperature within the normal range. Hypothermia and hyperthermia can negatively impact health outcomes, so timely and focused interventions are key. In order to raise awareness for the issue and support medical professionals, we developed a factsheet which is available on our website in seven languages.

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## GLANCE - Global Alliance for Newborn Care



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## WHY ZERO SEPARATION MATTERS

### What we have learnt from the pandemic

Congress season is picking up again and we have just had the wonderful opportunity to present at the Swedish Conference on Ultra Early Intervention which took place in hybrid format virtually and on-site in Stockholm. In a talk, our Chairwoman Silke Mader could elaborate on the results of separation policies in NICUs worldwide during the pandemic and how this has affected neonatal care in the short and long term. These results were drawn from a global parent survey, conducted and analysed by GLANCE/EFCNI, which have been published in a comprehensive report.

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The EFCNI 2023 policy and advocacy training workshop for patient and family representatives is supported by a restricted grant from Pfizer.

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