**Participant Information Sheet/Consent Form**

 

**Health/Social Science Research**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | Investigating Noise Levels in a Regional Special CareNursery: The Impact of Educational Interventions on Neonatal Care |
| **Short Title** | Neonatal noise audit |
| **Protocol Number** | [Protocol Number - TBA] |
| **Project Sponsor** | Charles Sturt University, School of Rural MedicineM Medicine |
| **Coordinating Principal Investigator/ Principal Investigator** | Dr Catherine Keniry / Dr David Newsom |
| **Associate Investigator(s)** | Ms Erin Trathen, Ms Eliza Heinecke Ms Jane Nichol |
| **Location** | Special Care Nursery- Wodonga Hospital |

**Part 1 What does my participation involve?**

**1 Introduction**

You are invited to take part in this research project, which is called Investigating Noise Levels in a Regional Special Care: The Impact of Educational Interventions on Neonatal Care. You have been invited because you are a staff member working in the neonatal nursery, or a parent/carer of a patient.

This Participant Information Sheet/Consent Form tells you about the research project. It explains the processes involved with taking part. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research.

Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don’t understand or want to know more about. Before deciding whether or not to take part, you might want to talk about it with a relative, friend or local health worker.

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you don’t wish to take part, you don’t have to.

If you decide you want to take part in the research project, you will be given a copy of this Participant Information to keep.

**2 What is the purpose of this research?**

This is an educational project to help increase awareness and change behaviors in terms of noise making within a regional special care nursery, to improve patient (neonate) safety.

Noise pollution in neonatal care settings has been associated with adverse outcomes for vulnerable neonates, including increased stress and impaired neurodevelopment. This study aims to assess noise levels in a regional special care nursery using a Drager sound ear device, comparing the recorded data against established noise guidelines. Following the initial measurement phase, an educational intervention will be implemented to train nursery staff on the impacts of noise on neonates and to introduce effective noise minimisation strategies. Visual cues (posters) will also be displayed throughout the nursery to reinforce these strategies. A subsequent measurement of noise levels will be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

The results of this research will be used by the researcher *Ms Eliza Heinecke* to obtain a Doctor of Medicine degree.

This research has been initiated by the researcher, *Dr David Newsom*, and supported by Co-ordinating Principal Investigator Dr Catherine Keniry, of Charles Sturt University’s School of Rural Medicine.

**3 What does participation in this research involve?**

Your participation in the research will involve completing an anonymous online questionnaire asking about your understanding of the impact of noise on neonates. Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes. The questionnaire includes 6 close-ended questions around your opinion on the noise levels within the nursery, the main sources of noise and the respondent’s perception of their contribution to the noise levels. A question on whether you have received any training or information on the noise levels within the nursery will be included. There are 2 surveys – one at the commencement of the research project, and one at the completion. The surveys are different – and each survey will only be available for the specified time of the project for which it is relevant.

This research project has been designed to ensure correct and appropriate interpretation of the data.

There are no costs associated with participating in this research project, nor will you be paid.

**4 Other relevant information about the research project**

This research will aim to involve all staff entering the special care nursery and all parents and carers during period of the study. The project is being supported by the Charles Sturt University School of Rural Medicine. AWH employees are undertaking the research as part of a quality improvement project.

Results may be presented at a relevant national conference focused on neonatal care, paediatrics, and nursing. Additionally, results will be published in a peer-reviewed journal specialising in neonatology and paediatric nursing. Publication in these journals will ensure that our study is accessible to a broader audience of researchers and practitioners who can leverage our findings in their own work.

Furthermore, we plan to develop a brochure aimed at educating hospital staff, families and caregivers about the implications of noise on neonatal health.

**5 Do I have to take part in this research project?**

Participation in any research project is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, once you have submitted the survey we cannot contact you to withdraw your submission as the survey is anonymous.

If you do decide to take part, you can download this Participant Information to keep.

Your decision whether to take part or not to take part will not affect your routine care, your relationship with professional staff or your relationship with Albury Wodonga Health.

**6 What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this research; however, possible benefits may include increasing awareness around noise levels within the nursery and the impacts of excessive noise exposure on neonatal patients.

There will be no clear benefit to you from your participation in this research.

**7 What are the possible risks and disadvantages of taking part?**

You may feel that some of the questions we ask are stressful or upsetting. If you do not wish to answer a question, you may skip it and go to the next question, or you may stop immediately. If you become upset or distressed as a result of your participation in the research project, please contact your GP, or a counselling service such as Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Educational interventions may face resistance from staff due to existing routines or skepticism regarding the necessity of changing practices. Overcoming these barriers requires careful planning and effective communication strategies. Staff are required to participate in ongoing education.

**8 What if I withdraw from this research project?**

If you do wish to participate, you do not have to. As detailed above, as the survey is anonymous, you cannot withdraw your responses post submission.

**9 Could this research project be stopped unexpectedly?**

This research project may be stopped unexpectedly for a variety of reasons. These may include reasons such as implementation challenges, resource allocations and data collection limitations.

**10 What happens when the research project ends?**

We will provide a summary report outlining the study's findings and recommendations for practice, ensuring that staff participants are informed about how their involvement contributed to the research. This summary will be distributed via email and made available in printed format within the nursery. Additionally, we will host a feedback session for staff members to discuss the results and explore how the educational interventions can be integrated into daily routines.

For parents and carers, they can access the Charles Sturt University School of Rural Medicine research pages ([link)](https://science-health.csu.edu.au/schools/medicine/research/about-our-research) to access any publications or study updates.

The successful dissemination of the findings is paramount to fostering improvements in neonatal care practices. By engaging with the health and medical community, the public, and study participants, we aim to promote a culture of awareness and action regarding noise management in neonatal environments. Through these efforts, we hope to contribute to the overall well-being of vulnerable infants and enhance the quality of care provided in special care nurseries.

The results of this study will be made available through the AWH Research Office publications website. Results may also be shared at Grand Rounds or internal seminars, such as the All Staff Webinar.**Part 2 How is the research project being conducted?**

**11 What will happen to information about me?**

Data collection:

The study will adopt a mixed-methods approach. Initial noise level assessments will be conducted using a Drager sound ear, with data collected at various times throughout the day to account for fluctuations in nursery activity. This data will be compared against established noise guidelines to identify areas of concern. Following the initial assessment, all staff that spend any time in the regional special care nursery will undergo a training program that emphasises the importance of noise control in neonatal care, alongside the introduction of visual cues designed to promote a quieter environment. Post-intervention noise levels will be measured using the same methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational strategies implemented.

Noise levels will be quantitatively assessed over a specified period using the Drager sound ear device, which provides real-time decibel readings. The collected data will be compared against recommended noise guidelines established by health authorities, which suggest that sound levels in neonatal units should not exceed 45 decibels during the day and 35 decibels at night. Following the initial assessment, an educational intervention will be conducted, focusing on the effects of noise on neonatal health and the importance of creating a quieter environment. Staff will be trained on practical noise reduction techniques, and visual signs will be strategically placed throughout the nursery to remind staff and visitors of the importance of maintaining low noise levels.

Ambient noise levels will be recorded before and after the intervention in the nursery. Post-intervention measurements will be collected to determine the effectiveness of the educational training and visual cues in reducing noise levels. All information recorded from staff and family/carer questionnaires will be confidential and de-identified. Your information will only be used for the purpose of this research project and it will only be disclosed with your permission, except as required by law.

The personal, anonymous information that the research team collect and use is the information given in completed questionnaires.

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified.

**12 Complaints and compensation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Contact | Research Office |
| Telephone | 0428 056 672 |
| Email | research@awh.org.au |

**13 Who is organising and funding the research?**

This research project is being conducted by Dr David Newsom in conjunction with Charles Sturt University School of Rural Medicine.

**14 Who has reviewed the research project?**

All research in Australia involving humans is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

The ethical aspects of this research project have been approved by the HREC of *Albury Wodonga Health* and Charles Sturt University.

This project will be carried out according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

**15 Further information and who to contact**

The person you may need to contact will depend on the nature of your query. If you want any further information concerning this project or if you have any problems which may be related to your involvement in the project, you can contact the researcher or any of the following people:

 **Research contact people**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Dr David Newsom  |
| Email | DNewsom@awpg.com.au |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Dr Catherine Keniry  |
| Email | ckeniry@csu.edu.au |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Ms Erin Trathen  |
| Email | erin.trathen@awh.org.au0452 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Ms Jane Nichol  |
| Email | jane.nichol@awh.org.au |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Ms Eliza Heinecke  |
| Email | Eliza.heinecke@gmail.com |

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about being a research participant in general, then you may contact:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Albury Wodonga Health Research Office  |
| Telephone | 0428 056 672 |
| Email | research@awh.org.au |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reviewing HREC name | Albury Wodonga Health Human Research Ethics Committee (AWHHREC) |
| Telephone | 0428 056 672 |
| Email | research@awh.org.au |

**Reviewing HREC approving this research** **and HREC Executive Officer details**

consent section must date their own signature.

[**Submit an Expression of Interest to participate**](https://science-health.csu.edu.au/schools/medicine/research/doctor-of-medicine-md-project-expression-of-interest)