

Nutritional Evaluation and Optimisation in Neonates (NEON) trial of amino acid regimen and intravenous lipid composition in preterm parenteral nutrition: a randomised double-blind controlled trial

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Declared competing interests of authors: Sabita Uthaya is currently in the process of applying for a patent for the trial parenteral nutrition formulations. Jane Warwick has had personal fees paid for consultancy work by Novo Nordisk (Bagsværd, Denmark).

Published March 2016

DOI: 10.3310/eme03020

Plain English summary

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Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation 2016; Vol. 3: No. 2

DOI: 10.3310/eme03020

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Plain English summary

Infants born extremely preterm (defined as born before 31 weeks of gestation) spend several weeks and months in intensive care and are subject to various complications relating to their prematurity. Outside the womb, meeting the nutritional demands of these infants presents challenges. Experts have called for changes in how we feed babies, but we do not know if giving more nutrition is better for babies. We studied two aspects of parenteral nutrition, a fluid used to feed babies through their veins to overcome gut immaturity. First, we compared a stepwise increase in protein intake with giving the baby what is the recommended daily intake. Second, we compared the type of fat currently used in parenteral nutrition with a newer combination of fat that has been shown to be less harmful to the liver. Babies were allocated to one or the other group by chance. This is so that both groups are similar at the start of the study so that any difference that is found at the end can be explained by the difference in the nutrition we gave them. Using special magnetic scans (to measure body muscle mass and fat in the liver) we studied the babies around the time of their due date. We found that, provided extremely preterm babies were fed milk from the start, giving the recommended daily intake of protein from birth instead of gradually increasing the intake did not result in any difference in muscle mass at term age. In addition, the new type of fat did not show any benefit over the old type of fat.

Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation

ISSN 2050-4365 (Print)

ISSN 2050-4373 (Online)

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This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the EME programme as project number 08/99/04. The contractual start date was in February 2010. The final report began editorial review in January 2015 and was accepted for publication in October 2015. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The EME editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

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