

Efficacy and safety of ketogenic diet in infants with epilepsy: KIWE RCT

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Published October 2024

DOI: 10.3310/YJTR9895

Plain language summary

Efficacy and safety of ketogenic diet in infants with epilepsy:
KIWE RCT

Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation 2024; Vol. 11: No. 16

DOI: 10.3310/YJTR9895

NIHR Journals Library www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk

Plain language summary

Many babies with epilepsy continue to have seizures ('fits'), despite taking medicines. These babies are unlikely to make the same developmental progress as babies without epilepsy. Ketogenic diets are high in fat and low in carbohydrate and have been shown to reduce seizures in older children and adults.

Babies (age 1–24 months) with epilepsy, who still had seizures despite having tried medicines, either started a ketogenic diet or another medicine. They then stayed on this treatment for 8 weeks. We wanted to know whether there was a difference in the number of seizures in the last 2 weeks of treatments compared to before.

Seventy-eight babies started a ketogenic diet and 58 started another medicine. Overall, the number of seizures babies had every day was similar in both groups.

A similar number of babies in both groups either had to go to hospital for some reason or stay in hospital for longer. This was mostly because of seizures. Two babies suffered 'sudden unexpected death in epilepsy' and another died during a planned surgery. These deaths were not thought to be related to the ketogenic diet.

Both the ketogenic diet and the medicines helped to reduce the number of seizures in the babies. Babies in both groups had similar side effects. Doctors could consider starting a ketogenic diet in babies who continue to have seizures even though they have tried medicines to stop their seizures.

Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation

ISSN 2050-4373 (Online)

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The EME programme is funded by the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), with contributions from the Chief Scientist Office (CSO) in Scotland and National Institute for Social Care and Health Research (NISCHR) in Wales and the Health and Social Care Research and Development (HSC R&D), Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland.

This article

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the EME programme as award number 12/10/18. The contractual start date was in June 2014. The draft manuscript began editorial review in January 2022 and was accepted for publication in March 2024. 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' manuscript and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the draft document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this article.

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