



Dear friends and supporters of EFCNI,

In May, we traditionally highlight the topic of “NICU design”, one of the key areas of the European Standards of Care for Newborn Health (ESCNH). This month, we feature two insightful videos with Associate Professor Bente Tandberg on the importance of standards for building and designing NICUs, along with a guest article on innovative building plans from Offenburg, Germany.

We are also excited to re-launch our “Zero Separation” campaign, advocating for parents’ 24/7 access to their child in the NICU, emphasising the importance of family presence and support. Additionally, the key results from our “ResQ Family” project have been released, revealing the significant impact of RSV on families with a hospitalised child. These findings are essential for understanding and addressing the challenges families face in the hospital environment.

Many thanks for your continuous support!

Kind regards,

## EFCNI



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### HEALTHY NUTRITION CHOICES FOR A HEALTHY PREGNANCY

## Reducing (early) preterm birth with omega-3 supplementation

DHA, an omega-3 fatty acid, has been shown to reduce the risk of (early) preterm birth. As part of our “Healthy Early Nutrition – Healthy Future” campaign, we spoke to Irene Cetin, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Department of Biomedical and Clinical Sciences, University of Milan. She presented the new recommendations for DHA supplementation during pregnancy and lactation and explained the benefits and evidence behind them. This clinical practice guideline provides healthcare professionals with the information they need to help their patients achieve and maintain a healthy omega-3 intake.

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### RESQ FAMILY

## Key study results released: Report and research article now available

How does the hospitalisation of an infant for Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) impact the daily life of affected families? Following the launch of the ResQ Family study in 2022/23, we are delighted to present our Project Report, which summarises the key study results at a glance. This report provides an overview of the most important cross-national key findings and outlines not only RSV-related symptoms but also health-related

dimensions of parents' quality of life. It also includes country-specific findings focusing on parental feelings about their child's health, health literacy, disease awareness, and the quality of communication and support structures from healthcare providers. Please help us raise awareness for RSV prevention and the benefits of improved support and care structures for affected families.

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## Network



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### POLITICAL INITIATIVE

## Partner parent organisation Prematuridade launches National Intersectoral Plan to tackle preterm births

Brazil is one of the countries with the highest numbers of preterm births in the world. To continue to tackle this major health issue, our partner parent organisation in Brazil, Prematuridade, launched a new political initiative. The National Intersectoral Plan engages civil society, politicians and all branches of the government as well as the medical and healthcare community to analyse, evaluate, and improve public health policies on a national scale. It aims to eradicate avoidable preterm births and to establish equitable access to healthcare for all Brazilians.

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### STRONGER TOGETHER

## Belgian parent and patient associations join forces to raise awareness for Zero Separation



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During the month of May, our partner parent organisation Noah's Ark Belgium and partner associations VVOC, Cokoën, and Odisee jointly promoted Zero Separation at different events together. The "Zero Separation Tour Belgium" included three conferences held by internationally renowned expert Dr. Nils Bergman in three major NICUs. More than 200 neonatal professionals attended his talks and participated in discussions. The week after, the Zero Separation Run took place. A team of 20 runners and walkers participated in the 20KM of Brussels run, carrying a little doll under a baby sling on their chest to raise awareness for Zero Separation and the benefits of Kangaroo Mother Care, making other runners and the audience curious to learn more.

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THANK YOU

## The recruitment phase of the TREOCAPA study has officially ended

As the recruitment phase of the TREOCAPA trial is officially completed, the entire study team would like to extend a heartfelt "Thank You" to all participants and their parents for their valuable time and contribution to this research. We are proud to have reached the recruitment target of approximately 800 participants, including patients at 44 study sites in 14 European countries. This has enabled us to perform this essential investigation into the effects of paracetamol on the closure of the patent ductus arteriosus in preterm infants. The data collected will now be analysed and lead to new findings in this field, which will be published in a few months' time. We would like to thank all participants for their engagement in this study, as the medical and scientific knowledge gained will help other newborns.

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### FAMILY-INTEGRATED CARE

#### “Not a goal, but a given”: Survey records how parents experience family-integrated care in the NICU

The hospitalisation of a newborn is also associated with challenges in parent-infant bonding. To address this, family-integrated care is an approach to enhance parent-infant bonding and promote the health of both newborn and parents. A Dutch parent survey has now examined the experiences of 344 parents in the NICU and what they need to feel welcome and supported. Among other things, parents wished for better information from healthcare professionals, more support from social workers, and the opportunity to comfort their newborn during painful procedures.

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### PROBIOTICS AND NEC

#### The current scientific debate on using probiotics on infants at risk of necrotising enterocolitis (NEC)

NEC is one of the leading diseases among preterm infants and can be fatal. Many NICUs therefore supplement preterm infants with probiotics in an effort to protect them against it. The recent death of a preterm infant associated with bacteria in the probiotic prevention-treatment of NEC sparked a debate about whether the administration of probiotics is still safe. The position statement, supported by ESPGHAN and EFCNI, summarises the current debate and takes a stand on the side of scientific

evidence and parental advocacy.

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## PREVENTING PREECLAMPSIA

### Exploring the potential of AI in predicting a mother's risk of pre-eclampsia

May is Pre-eclampsia Awareness Month, reminding us of the 46,000 mothers who die from this pregnancy complication each year. A new risk prediction model has been developed in order to assess each individual woman's risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes if she has symptoms of pre-eclampsia. What makes this study unique is the sheer size of the data set, using data from more than 10,000 women from around the world to make accurate predictions. The model has the potential to reassure low-risk women or justify additional prevention and monitoring measures for high-risk mothers.

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## European Standards of Care for Newborn Health



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## NICU DESIGN

### Promoting equitable care through reference standards for NICU design

Learn more about the impact of smart NICU design through our two new videos with Associate Professor Bente Tandberg, Vice Chair of the Topic Expert Group for "NICU design" within the European Standards of Care for Newborn Health (ESCNH). In two comprehensive videos, Professor Tandberg elucidates the significance of reference standards in NICU design,

emphasising their role in establishing clear objectives for policy makers, hospital administrators, healthcare professionals, and patient advocates. These standards not only envision a protective physical environment for infants and their families but also aim to cultivate equitable care across Europe, promoting parental presence, family empowerment, and the strengthening of family bonds within the NICU environment.

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## NEONATAL CARE

### Improving newborn health through Kangaroo Mother Care

Preterm infants thrive with Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC), yet its global adoption varies. Despite proven benefits such as reduced mortality, fewer infections, and enhanced parental bonding, implementation challenges persist. An article by Pallás-Alonso et. al highlights the need for standardised guidelines and widespread education to ensure universal access to and understanding of KMC among healthcare providers and families.

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Klinikum Offenburg

## DESIGNING FOR FAMILY-CENTRED CARE

### Building the NICU of tomorrow in Offenburg, Germany

When several small clinics in Offenburg and Kehl were merged to create a new, modern central hospital, the neonatal staff saw an opportunity to advocate for architectural and design adaptations as well. The new building and design plans promote an infant- and family-centred approach to care with a “Zero



Separation” philosophy for continuous parent-child bonding. Through collaboration between neonatal staff, architects, and planners, the design integrates spacious delivery rooms and cosy family areas with discreet medical monitoring. This innovative approach aims to enhance the wellbeing of preterm infants, newborns, and their families, and sets a new standard for neonatal care in the region.

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© Livia Nagy Bonnard

#### NEONATAL NURSING

### “Once a nurse, always a nurse”: Impressions from the 2024 COINN conference

ESCNH Ambassador Livia Nagy Bonnard shares her impressions as a speaker at the Council of International Neonatal Nurses (COINN) conference, held from 6 - 8 May in Aalborg, Denmark. Drawing from her unique perspective as a former nurse and a mother of a preterm born son, she highlighted the crucial role of infant- and family-centred developmental care. Her heartfelt speech deeply resonated with attendees, underscoring the need for enhanced support and training for neonatal nurses to improve the NICU experience for families.

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## EFCNI-Academy



#### INTERNATIONAL KANGAROO CARE AWARENESS DAY 2024

Video interview on the benefits of skin-to-skin and Kangaroo Mother Care



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As part of the “International Kangaroo Care Awareness Day” on 15 May 2024, attention was once again drawn to the many benefits of “kangarooing”, especially for preterm born babies. The St. Joseph Hospital in Berlin Tempelhof, Germany, practices the simple but highly effective method of Kangaroo Mother Care in its daily work and is a true pioneer in this field. In this interview, the experts Professor Michael Abou-Dakn and Dr. Caroline Schmitt talk about the rooming-in concept for parents and their preterm-born babies, how the care of affected families looks like in certified “family-friendly” hospital, the promotion of breastfeeding through early bonding, and future developments in child- and family-centred developmental care. Please note that this interview is in German.

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## GLANCE - Global Alliance for Newborn Care



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UPCOMING CAMPAIGN

### Zero Separation. Together for better care!

“Kangaroo Care and Zero Separation has been the best experience we had while we were in the hospital!”, says Kateregga Brazilio, father of a surviving twin girl born preterm. The campaign “Zero Separation. Together for better care!” by GLANCE continues, aiming to enable infant- and family-centred developmental care, with access for parents to be with their baby 24/7. Read more about the campaign, get involved, and feel free to share our upcoming social media posts.

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