

Swaddle Bathing in the NICU to Improve Thermoregulation and Decrease Stress

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Background/Introduction

Bathing is one of the most common routine nursing procedures performed on newborns, historically done without regard to the infant's stress response or developmental care. Within the NICU, it is of the utmost importance to attempt to limit and control these stressors. Research has shown that swaddled immersion bathing supports family-centered care, decreases stress, conserves energy, improves state control, enhances the ability to feed after bathing, decreases temperature loss, causes less crying, and facilitates social interaction. Pre-intervention, the NICU bathed infants by either using an emesis basin for immersion bathing or by administering a sponge bath. Both of these bathing methods can be stressful for NICU infants. Our average NIPS was 4.33 and 26.7% of the infants were hypothermic (less than 97.7 axillary) post bath.



Purpose/Objectives

The purpose was to implement swaddled immersion bathing in the NICU to decrease stress and increase thermoregulation.

Methods

We focused our study on infants who were either born or adjusted to 30 weeks; 157 baths performed, sample size 77. We excluded infants who had IV access, required respiratory support higher than 3L of high flow nasal cannula, had an umbilical cord or had recently been circumcised. The effectiveness was measured by obtaining pre and post bath axillary temperatures to track thermoregulation and a NIPS score to measure the infants' stress response. Steps included: collecting data for two months before implementation using the data collection sheet; educating NICU staff (video, quiz, and sign off on the new bathing method); implementation of swaddled immersion bathing using the Turtle Tub; and post-implementation data collection.



Results

With the initiation of swaddled immersion bathing, the NIPS scores were found to be significantly lower in comparison to sponge bathing or basin bathing; pre-intervention NIPS average of 4.33 to post overall average of 0.73. There also was a decrease in the number of infants who were hypothermic post swaddled bathing; 26.7% pre-intervention and 5.1% post.



Conclusions and Implications/Lessons Learned

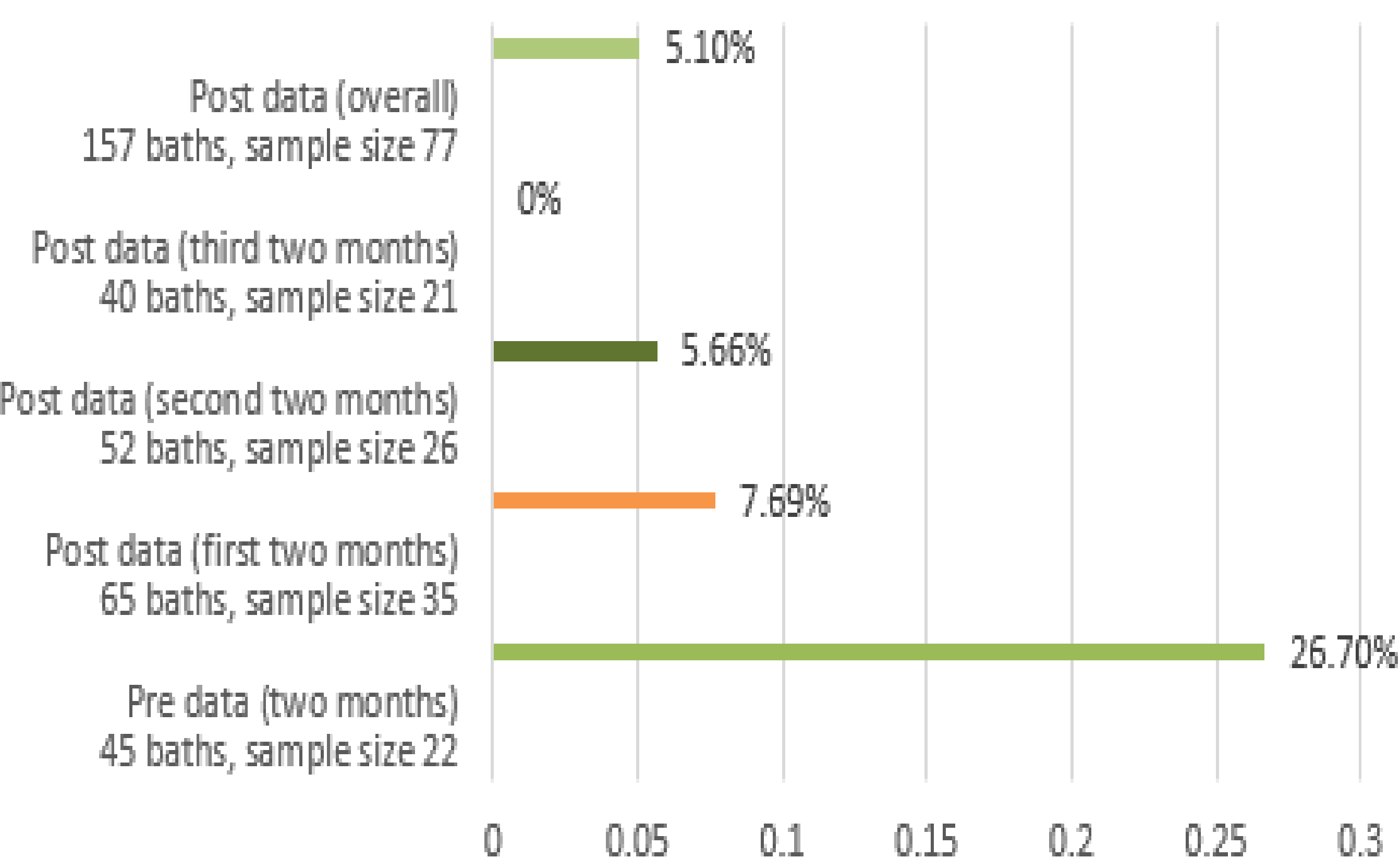
The goal was achieved as the NICU had a significantly lower percentage of hypothermic infants after the bath and our NIPS score decreased significantly. We recommend adopting swaddled immersion bathing in NICUs and on Mother Baby units, as well as teaching families to swaddle bathe at home.



References

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Thermoregulation Measure by Percent Hypothermic



Stress Measured by NIPS

