

REHOSPITALIZATION RATES OF NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE GRADUATES FOR SIX MONTHS POST INITIAL DISCHARGE. Sharon A. Kirkby and Michael N. Musci Jr. ¹, Paidos Health Management Services, Paoli, PA.

Purpose: To analyze hospital readmission rates for neonatal intensive care (NICU) infants 6 months post hospital discharge.

Methods: We collected readmission data for 6 months for infants discharged home from the NICU in three states for one Health Plan. Data was obtained by clinical and claims databases. We subdivided the population by gestational age (GA) and compared length of stay (LOS) of hospitalization and use of home care (HC). Home care was defined as receiving at least one follow up visit immediately after discharge.

Results: There were 179 infants discharged alive from the NICU between April 1 and September 30, 1999 in this population. 100% of these infants remained with the Health Plan for 6 months following hospital discharge. The overall readmission rate was 1.68% within the first 2 weeks, 5.03% within the first month, and 14.52% within the first 6 months after discharge. There was 1 death (0.056%). 14 infants had 1 readmission only. 12 infants had more than 1 readmission. There were 39 readmissions during the 6 month follow up period. Respiratory issues (11/39, 28.2%), infection (7/39, 17.9%) and scheduled readmissions for congenital anomalies and hernia repair (7/39, 17.9%) were the most common reasons for readmission. Readmission rates by GA: 20% (2/10) of infants <29 weeks; 16% (4/25) GA 29-32 weeks; 10.96% (8/73) GA 33-36 weeks; and 16.9% (12/71) GA ≥ 37 weeks. There were no statistical differences in each GA subgroup compared to LOS. Of the infants readmitted within 30 days of discharge, 2 were scheduled readmissions and 7 were non-scheduled readmissions. In the non-scheduled readmissions, only 42.9% (3/7) received a home care visit immediately after discharge. The mean data are:

	GA at birth	Hospital LOS	% with HC
Readmitted	34.85	22.69	69.2
Readmitted within 30 days	34.85	22.71	42.9
Non Readmitted	35.25	15.35	54.7

Conclusion: Readmission of the NICU graduate is known to be higher than healthy newborns. Few studies report on the immediate discharge period and the reasons surrounding readmission. This data shows GA and LOS are not predictors for readmission. Preliminary data shows use of a home health care visit may impact the readmission rate within the first 30 days after discharge. Increased awareness of this is useful for those involved in discharge planning and follow up, including home care. Further studies are necessary to document outcomes of this population beyond the initial hospitalization and to determine ways to best minimize readmission and provide appropriate outpatient follow up.