

FEEDING INTERVENTION WITH A PACIFIER ACTIVATED DEVICE

A New Therapy for Infants At-risk for Cerebral Palsy

Children with/at high-risk for CP have frequent feeding problems, such as dysphagias, chronic aspiration and abnormal feeding behaviors. These disorders often result in morbidities during infancy and have a profound impact on family/community participation and development into adulthood. Evidence for behaviorally-based feeding interventions ranges from insufficient to moderate, pointing to a clear need for rigorous studies.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

This research project will determine the efficacy of non-nutritive suck (NNS) training using a pacifier-activated device (PAM) with mothers' voice to condition suck-strength and rhythmicity, in improving the feeding and developmental outcomes of infants at high-risk for CP. We will perform a large randomized controlled trial in US and Australia NICU infants with abnormal General Movements and characteristic neuroimaging lesions to accomplish the following: First, demonstrate that NNS training with PAM/ mother's voice will result in improved oral feeding skills before discharge as compared to control infants receiving mother's voice separate from pacifier sucking; and, secondly, Demonstrate that NNS training will result in fewer feeding difficulties and medical complications in the first year, with potentially improved neurodevelopment, in infants classified high-risk for CP by 3-4 month GMA.



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\$107,000 over 3 years