

LAY SUMMARY of PICANet 2010 Annual Report

PICANet is an international clinical audit that collects information on children receiving intensive care in Britain and Ireland. Clinical audit provides a way of measuring the quality of care received by patients by looking at what happens to patients during and after their care, and examining how the services that deliver that care are set up.

PICANet collects data to help doctors and nurses to plan how to ensure that the best quality care is given to children in Paediatric Intensive Care Units. These data also help PICANet to describe what external and social factors affect the admission of critically ill children to paediatric intensive care

PICANet works with the teams of doctors and nurses who care for children in Paediatric Intensive Care Units. We have also established links with patient and parent groups to review the facilities and information available to families.

Every year PICANet publish a report including information on the numbers of children who receive care and the type of treatment they receive in each unit. No individual child can ever be identified. This year, the report highlights the following:

- Over 49,000 children aged between 0 and 15 years received care in a Paediatric Intensive Care Unit in England, Wales Scotland and Northern Ireland in the three years 2007 - 2009.
- In the UK there are 28 NHS Hospital Trusts where children are admitted for intensive care and 60% of these admissions are as a result of unplanned emergencies.
- Children are generally transported to hospital by specially trained teams of doctors and nurses.
- Nearly half the children are under 1 year of age (47%) and more boys (56%) than girls are admitted for intensive care.
- A large proportion (64%) of children receive help with their breathing via a tube using a machine called a ventilator although the numbers vary by hospital.
- Most children stay in paediatric intensive care 2 days or less but this may vary from less than an hour to over a week.
- It is extremely rare for children to die in paediatric intensive care and over 95% leave this type of specialist care alive.
- All the hospitals taking part in PICANet have death rates which are no higher than expected after taking account of how ill the children they treat are.
- There are minimum standards laid down by the Paediatric Intensive Care Society, the professional society of doctors and nurses who work in paediatric intensive care and PICANet is working with this society to ensure standards are measured properly.

PICANet makes a number of recommendations for improving the Paediatric Intensive Care service. In 2010 these include:

- PICANet continues to work with patient / parent groups and the clinical community to improve the experience of children and parents at a very stressful time.
- PICANet should continue to support the development of and measurement against standards developed in collaboration with the doctors and nurses working in paediatric intensive care.
- NHS Trusts should work closely with commissioners (who pay for paediatric intensive care services) to review their current qualified nurse staffing levels and ensure that PICUs have the right number of staff with the right qualifications.

More information on PICANet can be found at www.picanet.org.uk.