

# The impact of persisting pain following surgery in neonates

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Status	RECRUITING
Sponsor	Macquarie University
Enrollment	138 participants

## Plain Language Summary

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Babies who require major surgery in their first month of life often experience ongoing pain during their time in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Researchers are growing increasingly concerned about how this early-life pain exposure might affect long-term brain development, growth, and even social functioning. The question being explored in this study is whether the duration of treated pain — not just the number of painful procedures — is linked to development outcomes after the baby goes home.

The study will follow infants who had major surgery before 28 days of age through their early development, measuring motor skills, thinking, language, social development, and growth at key timepoints after discharge. Researchers will also look at psychosocial wellbeing and the parent-infant relationship during this critical period.

You may be eligible if your baby had at least one major surgery before 28 days of age, was admitted to the NICU, and at least one parent or caregiver is able to understand written and spoken English. Babies whose mothers used significant illicit drugs in pregnancy, or who are known to child protection services, or who require heart-lung bypass surgery are excluded.

## Key Eligibility Criteria

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### Inclusion (3)

- i. Had at least one major surgery less than 28 days of age. Major surgery is defined as an open (e.g., gastroschisis) or opening of a major body cavity including the head, thorax, and abdomen;
- ii. Were admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit;
- iii. Have at least one parent/caregiver who is able to understand written and spoken English in order to participate.

### Exclusion (3)

- i. Are diagnosed with neonatal abstinence syndrome from maternal drug use, or
- ii. Are known to the Family and Community Services.
- iii. Neonates who are expected to undergo cardiopulmonary bypass.

## Locations (1 total)

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The Children's Hospital at Westmead - Westmead, NSW, Australia