Pulse Oximetry Screening for Critical Congenital Heart Defects: A European Consensus Statement

Summary*

Critical congenital heart defects (CCHD) are life-threatening and timely detection is essential for optimal outcome. Experts in CCHD screening and representatives from major European paediatric and neonatal societies convened to develop suitable and implementable evidence-based recommendations on pulse oximetry screening (POS) for CCHD across Europe. POS has been shown to be a simple, quick and painless tool for identifying babies with CCHD which is inexpensive, acceptable and has a high specificity and moderate sensitivity. POS should be performed in two extremities (right hand and either foot) using new generation, motion tolerant equipment after 6 hours of life or before discharge (preferably before 24 hours of life). Several screening protocols are available and current data does not differentiate a ‘best’ protocol; thus, countries may decide upon which protocol best fits their population. Adopting POS at a national level across Europe will help improve management of these life-threatening conditions.

*The full consensus statement can be found at: http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642(17)30066-4/fulltext