

# “How are you not snapping her in half?”

## Parent/carers’ perceptions of respiratory physiotherapy on PICU: a service evaluation.

Meehan C<sup>1</sup>; Shkurka E<sup>2</sup>; Shannon H<sup>2</sup>;

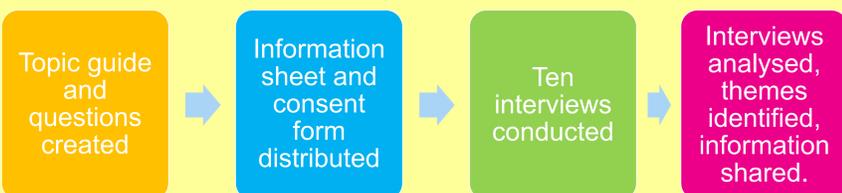
<sup>1</sup> Evelina London Children’s Hospital, Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust,

<sup>2</sup>UCL GOS Institute of Child Health, London UK

Contact: [chloe.meehan@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:chloe.meehan@gstt.nhs.uk)

### Introduction/background.

Respiratory physiotherapy is provided to children in intensive care and includes a variety of manual techniques and use of equipment to assist with secretion clearance, improve areas of lung collapse and help with the child’s work of breathing. Ensuring that parent/carers are informed and involved in their child’s care is part of the ethos of intensive care and the aim of the study was to explore parental/carer perceptions of respiratory physiotherapy on PICU.



### Methods.

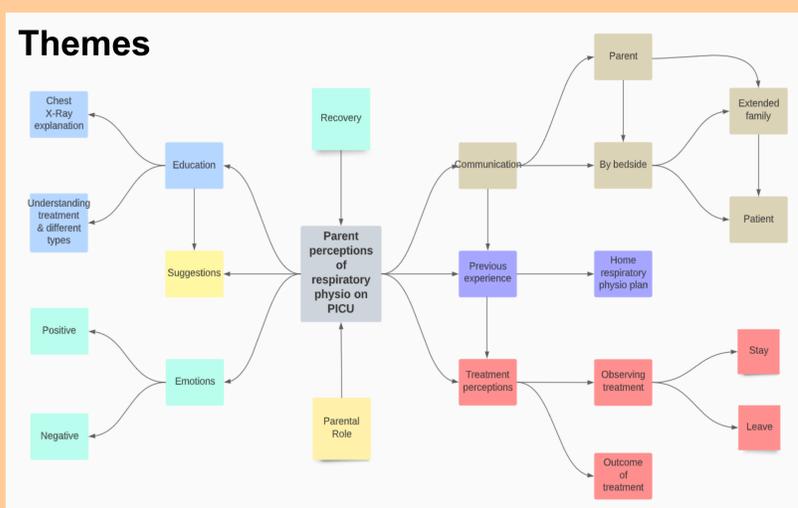
A service evaluation involved semi-structured interviews conducted in a paediatric tertiary hospital in London. Parents/carers were approached if their child had received respiratory physiotherapy during an intensive care admission. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis.

Table 1: Characteristics of parents interviewed and their children.

	Categories	Number (%)
Parent/care role	Mother and Father	3 (30%)
	Mother	6 (60%)
	Father	1 (10%)
Ethnicity/nationality (as stated by parents)	British	7 (70%)
	British/Irish	1 (10%)
	European	2 (20%)
Location of interview	Family room	3 (30%)
	PICU	6 (60%)
	Ward	1 (10%)
<b>Patient information</b>		
Gender	Male	6 (60%)
	Female	4 (40%)
Condition	Neuro disability (CP, SMA, Patau syndrome)	5 (50%)
	Cardiac (Cardiomyopathy, HLHS)	2 (20%)
	Respiratory (Pneumonia, bronchiolitis)	3 (30%)
Respiratory status at time of interview	Self-ventilating	6 (60%)
	Intubated	3 (30%)
	Non-invasive ventilation	1 (10%)
Respiratory status at time of physiotherapy	Intubated	10 (100%)

### Results.

Ten parents/carers were interviewed, eight themes were identified: communication, previous experience, treatment perceptions, education, emotions, parental role, recovery and suggestions.



**Theme:** previous experience. ‘And chest physio in the PICU has been like such an important part of his treatment...but I feel like it’s an undervalued part of his care....it’s quite difficult to explain to people isn’t it?’

**Theme:** communication. ‘So it’s a bond of trust. The way they tell things, yeah, makes you very comfortable.’

**Theme:** Treatment perceptions. ‘Not thinking that it is hurting because she would fall asleep..... but you think? She looks like she’s being pummelled a bit.’

### Conclusions.

Parents/carers valued the role of physiotherapy in PICU, and most felt informed as to the nature of treatments. Further resources could help prepare parents/carers for observing physiotherapy.

**References:** Basch C (1987) Focus group interview: an under-utilised research technique for improving theory and practice in health education. Health Education Quarterly 14, 411–418.  
Geoghegan S, Oulton K, Bull C, Brierley J, Peters M, Wray J. (2016) The Experience of Long-Stay Parents in the ICU: A Qualitative Study of Parent and Staff Perspectives. Pediatr Crit Care Med. 2016 Nov;17(11):496-501