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## NICU Database and Quality Initiatives Increases Positive Outcomes for Premature Babies

*Scott & White, Temple, TX*

**Keywords:** *care team, neonatal database, NICU, patient support, premature babies, Scott & White, Texas, treatment*

Scott & White's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) has one of the lowest mortality rates in the United States. This is in part due to process improvement and quality assurance measures to reduce morbidity and mortality. Since its participation in Vermont-Oxford Network, a global database of best practices in neonatal care, the neonatal team has implemented processes that improve patient care. Since 1996, Scott & White has shared its outcomes and best practices with almost 800 NICUs worldwide that subscribe to the database, and has benefitted from their best practices as well. The Scott & White team's focus is to improve care for neonates of 22-30 weeks gestation, weighing between 400 and 1500 grams.

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### NICU database increases quality efforts at Scott & White Healthcare

One of Scott & White Healthcare's quality assurance initiatives includes voluntary participation in the Vermont-Oxford Network, a global database of best practices in neonatal care. Since 1996, Scott & White has shared its outcomes and best practices with almost 800 neonatal intensive care units (NICU) worldwide that subscribe to the database, and benefitted from their best practices as well. The team's focus at Scott & White is improving care for neonates of 22-30 weeks gestation, weighing between 400 and 1500 grams.

Scott & White's NICU has one of the lowest mortality rates in the United States. This is in part due to process improvement and quality assurance measures to reduce morbidity and mortality. Since its participation in the database, the neonatal team has implemented processes that improve patient care, including the adjustment of environmental temperature in operating rooms for Cesarean sections to maintain infant admission temperature at 36 degrees Celsius.

Hypothermia in premature babies is associated with increased morbidity and mortality. The team performs screening eye exams in all neonates less than 1500 grams to identify retinopathy of premature, a condition associated with prematurity that can cause blindness. Scott & White has updated its oximeter technology so levels can be more accurately calibrated to meet neonates' needs so that retinopathy can be prevented.

"We're also looking at ways to reduce infections, necrotizing enterocolitis and chronic lung disease among premature infants," says Jie Guo, MD, neonatologist at Scott & White. Dr. Guo manages the hospital's submissions to the database and reports aggregate findings from the database to the Children's Quality & Patient Safety Council at Scott & White. "The advances we've made are exciting and significantly benefit patients and families," she says. "We're looking forward to implementing additional quality process improvements in the future to ensure the best possible care for neonatal patients and families."

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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