Implementation of the NTrainer System into Clinical Practice Targeting Neurodevelopment of Pre-oral Skills and Parental Involvement

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The initiation of early oral motor assessments by neonatal occupational therapists (OT) and the implementation of an NTrainer system to help facilitate feeding progression in the premature infant population was incorporated into practice by the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center (OSUWMC) who partnered with Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Columbus, Ohio. OSUWMC did not have a set protocol to use with infants prior to beginning oral feeds and studies have found that providing oral motor stimulation in a consistent manner accelerates transition time to oral feeds. Anecdotally, through observation, repeated experience and data recorded by the NTrainer, the NICU team as a whole noted that infants who received early oral motor assessments by the neonatal OT and NTrainer therapy demonstrated a more mature NNS pattern, improved suck strength, and a decreased hypersensitivity to oral motor intervention, overall positively affecting the neurodevelopment of the preterm infant. These combined therapies also resulted in the development of a standard feeding guideline that begins at 29 weeks gestational age (GA).

The device used in this study was the NTrainer® by Innara Health

Used in hospitals across the country, the NTrainer System works in two ways to address feeding challenges: assessment and therapy. With its dual modes, this neonatal device has been shown to improve oral feeding and reduce length of stay. (1,2)

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1 Barlow, SM et.al, Journal of Perinatology 2008; 28:541-48