

Awareness of Impacts of Extreme Heat on Neonatal Health. A Need for Programmes and Education of Health Care Workers

Britt Nakstad

University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana

Abstract:

Extreme heat impacts on health and wellbeing of children. Immature thermoregulation, less sweating, a higher surface to body mass ratio than older, make them more vulnerable to heat-related illness, especially if the mother struggles with breastfeeding in the heat. Severe dehydration, renal failure, electrolyte imbalance may result. Upon admission a newborn was lethargic and minimally responsive, with poor perfusion. The tentative diagnosis from admission to primary and secondary hospitals to the day she demised in our tertiary hospital remained 'sepsis with shock'. The newborn exhibited signs of dehydration, and microbiology results were negative. Seizures appeared on day-of-life (DOL) 13. The baby demised at DOL 20. In newborns, it is challenging to distinguish septic shock from heat-related illness. Medical history including risk factors for infection and heat-related disease must be penetrated well. It is important for public and health care workers to be aware the potential seriousness of neonatal heat-related illness.