

# Neonatal diarrhea

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A research team from Italy designed a nationwide study aimed at investigating the frequency, etiology, clinical features, nutritional management, therapeutic approach, and outcomes of diarrhea observed in hospitalized neonates. Their study showed that neonatal diarrheal diseases are challenging clinical conditions due to their heterogeneous etiologies and possible severe outcomes.

Diarrhea represents a major condition responsible for pediatric mortality worldwide. The onset of neonatal diarrhea may rapidly lead to life threatening dehydration and malnutrition. Clinical and epidemiologic studies defining severity and etiology are needed in order to improve diagnostic and therapeutic approaches for the management of neonatal diarrhea.

A research team from Italy did a retrospective, nationwide study involving 5801 subjects observed in [neonatal intensive care](#) units during 3 years. The results of the investigation showed that, in particular setting, diarrhea is a relatively uncommon but insidious condition underlying a broad spectrum of illnesses. The list of diseases and mechanisms responsible for diarrhea in neonates is large and the number of possible etiologies is higher compared with older pediatric patients. Thus, early diagnosis and timely treatment are both crucial in the management of diarrhea in neonates. Their study will be published on June 7, 2010 in the [World Journal of Gastroenterology](#).

This is the first systematic study describing diarrhea in patients hospitalized in the neonatal intensive care unit in an industrialized

country and outside outbreak conditions. This study will help neonatologists to become more confidential with all the possible etiologies of [diarrhea](#) in neonates in order to recognize and correctly manage rare chronic cases who need the assistance of a specialized team dedicated to their long-term treatment. Specific guidelines for the management of diarrheal disorders in neonates are advocated.

This research opens the way to new investigations in the area of diarrheal diseases with neonatal onset. The results could be of importance for other experts in the field of infectious diseases, nutrition, cell biology, histology and genetics.

**More information:** Passariello A, Terrin G, Baldassarre ME, De Curtis M, Paludetto R, Berni Canani R. Diarrhea in neonatal intensive care unit. World J Gastroenterol 2010; 16(21): 2664-2668  
[www.wjgnet.com/1007-9327/full/v16/i21/2664.htm](http://www.wjgnet.com/1007-9327/full/v16/i21/2664.htm)

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