

# Study reveals large differences in drug prescriptions for newborns between NICUs

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Little is known concerning how extensively drugs are prescribed to newborns in different neonatal intensive care units (NICUs). A new *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* study of nearly 1,500 newborns admitted during 12 months to four different NICUs in The Netherlands found that drug use varies widely.

Cardiovascular and nervous system drugs were most often prescribed off-label in relation to newborns' age, and their prescription was highly variable between NICUs.

"These differences became larger with decreasing postmenstrual age although the proportion of off-label prescriptions in relation to neonatal age decreased," said lead author Dr. Robert Flint, of Erasmus Medical Center—Sophia Children's Hospital in The Netherlands.

The findings indicate that drug research in [newborns](#) should have high priority to ensure the use of safe and appropriate drug therapy in such young patients.

**More information:** Robert B. Flint et al, Large differences in neonatal drug use between NICUs are common practice: time for consensus?, *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/bcp.13563](#)

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