

# Workload of NICU nurses linked to missed nursing care

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(HealthDay)—The workload of neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)

nurses, and perceived workload in particular, is associated with missed nursing care for assigned infants, according to a study published online Nov. 12 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Heather L. Tubbs-Cooley, Ph.D., R.N., from The Ohio State University College of Nursing in Columbus, and colleagues examined the correlations between shift-level [workload](#) of individual nurses and missed [care](#) for assigned infants. A convenience sample of 136 nurses who provided direct patient care and completed unit orientation were enrolled. Nurses provided reports of shift-level workload and missed nursing care for 418 infants during 332 12-hour shifts. Workload was assessed with objective measures and a subjective measure (National Aeronautics and Space Administration Task Load Index [NASA-TLX]).

The researchers found that seven of 12 models demonstrated a significant worsening association between increased infant-to-[nurse](#) ratio and odds of missed care when workload variables were modeled independently (e.g., nurses caring for three or more [infants](#) were 2.51 times more likely to report missing any care during the shift). All 12 models demonstrated a significant worsening association of increased NASA-TLX subjective workload ratings with odds of missed care (e.g., each 5-point increase in rating was correlated with a 34 percent increase in likelihood of missing a nursing assessment for an assigned infant during the same shift).

"Subjective workload was the one variable that was consistently and strongly associated with missed care," Tubbs-Cooley said in a statement.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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