Purpose

The NEC-Zero Project’s aim is improving the lives of preemies while decreasing the incidence of necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) to zero.

Background

The incidence of this insidious and subtle disease is perplexing. This is further complicated with the variance of NEC rates between neonatal intensive care units.

Method

Funding for the NEC-Zero initiatives included a scoping review that involved two new meta-analyses, clinical recommendations, and implementation strategies to prevent and foster timely recognition of NEC.

Using the Translating Research into Practice (TRIP) framework a working group was convened of national stakeholders of expert nurses, physicians, dietitian, pharmacists, and parents (n=19).

Four subgroups were formed and tasked with answering key questions. Using GRADE criteria the strength of the evidence was determined and guided the recommendations. The stakeholder-engaged scoping review included 71 articles, 11 position statement and yielded 29 recommendations and 29 implementation strategies.

Lessons Learned

Subgroup diversity is important, select mindfully.

Expect the unexpected and some extra work. For example, parent representatives offered rich perspectives, valuable contributions resulting in unplanned and not budgeted activities such as the development of bilingual consumer educational pamphlets and development of a website. It’s all good.

Convening a national panel for a monthly meeting is an act of magic. Do not expect magic at every meeting. Maintain the agreed upon timeline.

Introduction, icebreakers, and small talk at the beginning of each meeting is important even with busy people to add fun and neutralize power differentials.

Barriers to effective collaboration is an ongoing enlightenment. Do not give up, low attendance is to be expected, especially in the summer.

Post-meeting de-briefings are important to engage all participants and individualize follow-up.

Checking-in with individual participants supports the group process. Let the participants know early on, they will be periodically contacted so it is expected.

Adapt communication preferences to the individual participant preference. For example, one meeting two meeting minutes were provided: A long version and a short version.

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