

J Brindley¹,
Royal Stoke University Hospital Neonatal Unit

Growth parameters of babies on the neonatal unit is poorly undertaken and documented and this impacts on the optimisation of their nutrition and future growth.

BACKGROUND

The growth of any baby on the neonatal unit is a high priority of staff. We have adopted nutrition rounds to ensure the babies receive expert advice from dieticians, speech and language therapists and members of the infant feeding team. They can only provide advice on a baby’s nutrition if they know how the baby is progressing, this is achieved by having weekly measurements of their weights, lengths and head circumferences (unless they are too unwell for this).

DIAGNOSTICS

It was noted by the nutrition team and staff on the ward that we were not achieving a target defined in our network guidelines for growth parameters to be measured weekly. This meant that the advice given for a baby to optimise their nutrition was often not based on contemporaneous measurements. I therefore collected data on the babies on the unit who had their growth parameters recorded and plotted on growth charts. This involved identifying the different locations we document measurements including nursing folders and growth charts within notes. It was clear that there was not just a problem in undertaking the measurements but also in documenting them- often babies had no growth charts in their notes or even the weight charts in their nursing notes.

AIM

All babies on the neonatal unit will have a growth chart and growth parameter sheet in their notes and have these parameters measured every week to improve their nutritional reviews.

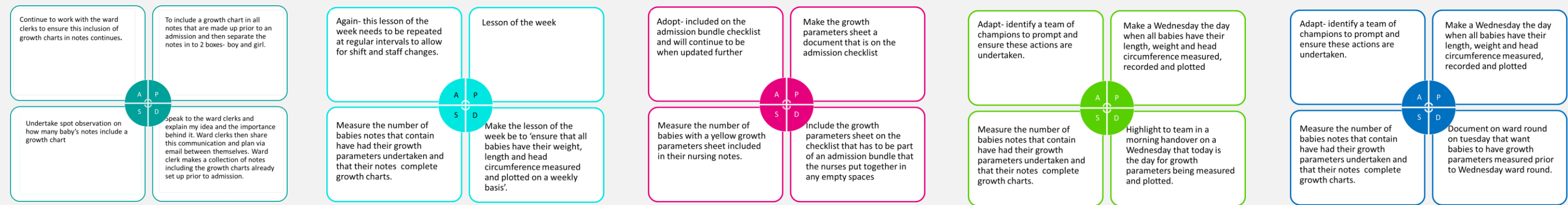
MEASURE

The number of babies admitted to the neonatal unit of any gestation and length of stay with up to date growth parameters documented on their growth charts. Excluding those who are clinically unsafe to have head circumference and length measured weekly. It involved monthly retrospective case note reviews of babies on the neonatal unit.

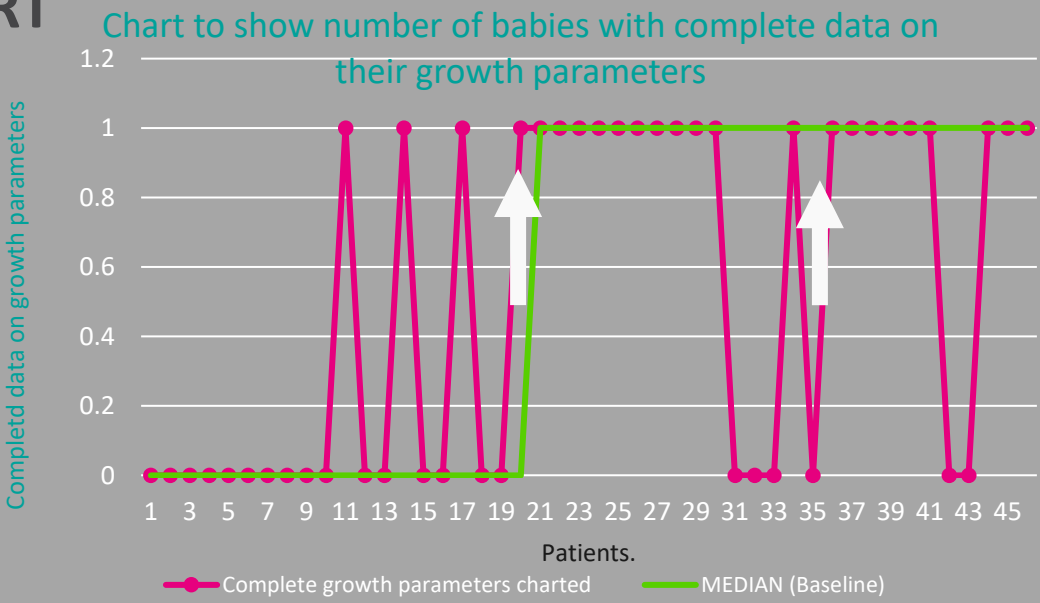
CHANGE IDEAS

- 1. To have growth charts in medical notes before patient has even been admitted
- 2. To include growth parameter chart in nursing document admission bundle
- 3. To make the aim a “lesson of the week”
- 4. To document in ward rounds when want growth parameters measuring
- 5. To train doctors to undertake length and head circumferences in babies.
- 6. To have a day of the week highlighted for measuring of growth parameters.

PDSA cycles



RUN CHART



REFLECTIONS & LEARNING

Changing processes such as including growth charts in notes and measurement sheets in admission bundle has been most successful in increasing the amount of babies with accurate growth parameters recorded and plotted.

Making a sustainable change by using champions who are permanently based on the ward and have an invested interest in monitoring and optimising babies nutrition- members of the infant feeding team and ward clerks.

Acknowledgements: All the staff on the neonatal unit at Royal Stoke University Hospital