DEVELOPMENTAL DYSPLASIA OF THE HIP SCREENING

The following guidelines are based on best available evidence and/or consensus achieved among the neonatologists at the Royal Hospital for Women and paediatric orthopaedic surgeons at Sydney Children’s Hospital. This LOP is developed to guide safe clinical practice in Newborn Care Centre (NCC) at The Royal Hospital for Women. Individual patient circumstances may mean that practice diverges from this Local Operations Procedure (LOP).

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INTRODUCTION

Developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) represents a spectrum of dynamic abnormalities of the hip joint. The problem arises due to a disruption of the normal anatomical relationship between the femoral head and the acetabulum. This disruption is critical as it is the dynamic relationship of these structures that allows normal development of the joint in the first few months of life. Clinical screening will detect most cases of neonatal hip instability, however, late presentation of DDH (with dislocation) still occurs in infants who have had a normal newborn clinical examination. The consequences of undiagnosed hip dislocation are potentially devastating. Moderate to severe osteoarthritis can occur as soon as the second decade, resulting in multiple surgeries and lifelong disability. Universal ultrasound screening at birth is not recommended due to a high false positive rate, which is not only costly but may result in over-treatment and consequent clinical harms (such as avascular necrosis). Optimal management therefore requires a combination of careful clinical examination, assessment of risk factors, targeted screening and ongoing clinical assessment throughout infancy.

1. AIM
   - To identify and investigate infants at risk of DDH and organise appropriate follow-up and referral in a timely manner.

2. PATIENT
   - Neonates.

3. STAFF
   - Medical and nursing staff.

4. EQUIPMENT
   - N/A

5. CLINICAL PRACTICE
   Mandatory Hip Examination – All newborn infants should have their hips examined before discharge as part of their newborn examination.
   1. Assess the newborn infant for any risk factors for DDH.
      - “High risk” infant
        i. Any infant with the following risk factors should be considered “high risk”:
           1. Breech presentation
           2. DDH in a first degree relative
        ii. Perform hip examination (see below). If the hips examine normally, arrange hip ultrasound at 6 weeks of age (6 weeks corrected age in an early term [37-38 weeks] or preterm infant [<37 weeks]) and make an appointment after ultrasound for neonatal clinic.
      - “Other at risk” infants
        i. Any infant with a combination of 2 or more following risk factors:
           1. Female
           2. Foot deformities (including postural talipes)
           3. Oligohydramnios
           4. Torticollis
           5. Birth weight >4 kg
DEVELOPMENTAL DYSPLASIA OF THE HIP SCREENING  cont’d

ii. Perform hip examination (see below). If the hips examine normally, arrange hip ultrasound at 6 weeks of age (6 weeks corrected age in an early term [37-38 weeks] or preterm infant [<37 weeks]) and make an appointment after ultrasound for neonatal clinic.

2. Perform hip examination (should be performed within the first 3-5 days of life prior to hospital discharge).
   - Examine the hips by gently abducting and adducting each hip.
   - Perform Barlow and Ortolani manoeuvres on each hip. The Barlow manoeuvre (test) attempts to dislocate the flexed hip with a postero-lateral movement of the proximal femur. The Ortolani manoeuvre (test) attempts to reduce the dislocated hip back into the acetabulum by moving the femoral head anteriorly whilst the hip is abducted (see Figure 1).

3. If either hip cannot be abducted (already dislocated) or if either hip is dislocatable:
   - Arrange review by level 2 fellow/consultant to confirm abnormal examination.
   - Arrange outpatient hip ultrasound as soon as possible (within one week).
   - Call Sydney Children's Hospital physiotherapy department on 9382 1050 and request review.
   - Call Sydney Children's Hospital orthopaedic registrar to arrange review.
   - Fax a referral letter to 9382 1461.
   NB. If the newborn infant is placed in an abduction splint, such as a Von Rosen splint or a Pavlik harness, the baby must have an ultrasound one week later to ensure hip joint is aligned correctly.

4. If either hip is “subluxable” or “clicky” but is not dislocatable:
   - Arrange review by level 2 fellow/consultant to confirm abnormal examination.
   - Arrange hip ultrasound at 6 weeks of age (6 weeks corrected age in an early term [37-38 weeks] or preterm infant [<37 weeks]) and make appointment after ultrasound for neonatal clinic.

**Arranging an Outpatient Hip Ultrasound**

1. Make an appointment through the radiology department at Sydney Children’s Hospital on extension 20301/20300. Ward clerks on the postnatal ward may assist.
2. Fax a paper referral to extension 20304 (do not generate in eMR). This must be clearly marked “outpatient”.
3. Call the neonatal clinic on extension 26044 for an appointment after the ultrasound with any available consultant. Dr John Smyth, Dr Parag Mishra and Dr Srini Bolisetty have clinics to accommodate these infants.
4. Inform the parents of all follow up arrangements. Infants can be discharged, particularly on weekends, pending these arrangements. In all cases, ensure that contact details for the family are up to date.
5. Make a note of the ultrasound appointment in the postnatal ward diary on the day after the ultrasound. These results should be followed up by the postnatal ward JMO. If the ultrasound is reported as normal, contact the family to advise them of the result and cancel their clinic appointment. In these cases, it is important that the infant is examined by their GP or primary care provider. If the family has other concerns they may still attend the neonatal clinic.
DEVELOPMENTAL DYSPLASIA OF THE HIP SCREENING  cont’d

Six Week Ultrasound Assessments
1. If the femoral head coverage is >50% and the acetabulum appears normal:
   o Examine the infant. If the clinical examination is normal, no further investigation is indicated. If the infant does not attend clinic, advise the parents to have hips examined by the primary care provider.
2. If the femoral head coverage is 40-50% and/or the acetabulum appears mildly dysplastic:
   o Examine the infant to ensure the hips are stable.
   o Repeat ultrasound at 4 months of age.
3. If the femoral head coverage is <40% and/or the acetabulum appears moderately or severely dysplastic:
   o Examine the infant to ensure the hips are stable.
   o Notify Sydney Children’s Hospital orthopaedic registrar and fax a referral letter to 9382 1461.
   N.B. If any hip cannot be abducted or is dislocatable, call Sydney Children's Hospital orthopaedic registrar and request urgent review. Fax a referral letter to 9382 1461.

Follow Up Ultrasound Assessments (Infants >3 months)
1. If the acetabulum appears mildly dysplastic on any ultrasound:
   N.B. This includes cases where the acetabulum appears normal on a subsequent ultrasound.
   o Examine the infant to ensure the hips are stable.
   o Arrange hip x-ray at 6 months of age.
   o Notify Sydney Children’s Hospital orthopaedic registrar and fax a referral letter to 9382 1461.
2. If the femoral head coverage is >50% and the acetabulum appears normal:
   o Examine the infant. If the clinical examination is normal, no further investigation is indicated. If the infant does not attend clinic, advise the parents to have hips examined by the primary care provider.
3. If the femoral head coverage is 40-50% and the acetabulum appears normal:
   o Examine the infant to ensure the hips are stable.
   o Notify Sydney Children’s Hospital orthopaedic registrar (page #44107) and fax a referral letter to 9382 1461. Arrange follow up imaging as recommended by orthopaedic team.
   o These infants can continue to be monitored in the neonatal clinic at the discretion of the orthopaedic team.
4. If the femoral head coverage is <40% and/or the acetabulum appears moderately or severely dysplastic:
   o Examine the infant to ensure the hips are stable.
   o Notify Sydney Children’s Hospital orthopaedic registrar and fax a referral letter to 9382 1461.
   N.B. If any hip cannot be abducted or is dislocatable, call Sydney Children's Hospital orthopaedic registrar and request urgent review. Fax a referral letter to 9382 1461.

6. DOCUMENTATION
   • Integrated Clinical Notes
   • Infant Blue Book

7. EDUCATIONAL NOTES
   • Definitions:
     o Ligamentous laxity – transient ligamentous laxity that is thought to be an effect of transplacental maternal hormones lasting for a few days after birth.
     o Acetabular dysplasia – incomplete bony modelling leaving a shallow, flattened socket.
     o Subluxation – movement of the femoral head due to a deficient acetabular roof and an incompletely covered femoral head.
     o Dislocation – dislocation of the femoral head from the acetabulum, usually postero-laterally over the fibro-cartilaginous rim.
DEVELOPMENTAL DYSPLASIA OF THE HIP SCREENING  cont’d

- DDH is detected by clinical examination in about 1-2% of infants but is dependent on the timing of examination. The exact incidence of DDH is difficult to define as the inclusion of ultrasonographic diagnoses is inconsistent in the literature. There is no “gold-standard” diagnostic test for DDH.

- Risk factors (de Hundt 2012):
  - Breech presentation (OR 5.7, 95% CI 4.4 – 7.4)
  - First degree relative with DDH (OR 4.8, 95% CI 2.8 – 8.2)
  - Clicking hips (OR 8.6, 95% CI 4.5 – 16.6)
  - Female (OR 3.8, 95% CI 3.0 – 4.6)
  - Foot deformities (OR 3.2, 95% CI 0.9 – 12.0)
  - Oligohydramnios (OR 2.5, 95% CI 0.8 – 8.2)
  - Torticollis (OR 1.15, 95% CI 0.1 – 9.2)
  - Birth weight >4 kg (OR 1.1, 95% CI 1.0 – 1.3)
  - Birth weight <2.5 kg (OR 0.3, 95% CI 0.2 – 0.3)
  - Prematurity (OR 0.5, 95% CI 0.2 – 1.2)

- The risk of developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) in breech preterm infants is uncertain (Quan 2013; Lee 2016). We have therefore recommended the same screening guidelines for all infants irrespective of gestation.

- There is evidence that screening leads to earlier identification of DDH, however, 60-80% of the hips of newborns identified as abnormal or as suspicious for DDH by physical examination and >90% of those identified by ultrasound in the newborn period resolve spontaneously and require no intervention. This must be weighed against the potential harms associated with treatment of infants identified by routine screening.

- Clinical Diagnosis:
  - In the neonatal period, the diagnosis of DDH is made by physical examination. Frank dislocation is not common and manifests on examination as hips that are difficult to abduct. On routine newborn examination, you are most likely to find hips in which you can feel movement or that are dislocatable over the posterior margin of the acetabulum.
  - DDH is a dynamic process and examination may be normal in the newborn period and become abnormal later. Examination of the hips should be a routine part of all infant screening examinations.
  - The physical signs change as the infants grows and after the age of three months the Barlow and Ortolani tests may be unreliable. Other physical signs and symptoms should be sought including asymmetric thigh or gluteal folds, leg length discrepancy, prominent greater trochanter, limited hip abduction, gait abnormalities, difficulty walking.

- Diagnostic imaging:
  - X-ray – the predominantly cartilaginous nature of the bones make x-rays an unsuitable means of assessing structure in the first few months after birth, although frank dislocation will be apparent on x-ray. After the first 4 months a number of useful measurements can be made as well as assessment of femoral epiphyseal ossification which is characteristically delayed in DDH.
  - Ultrasound allows static and dynamic analysis of the neonatal hip. The position of the femoral head, degree of acetabular coverage, stability on dynamic testing and confirmation of a satisfactory location for a splinted hip are all achieved with non-invasive ultrasonography.

8. RELATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES/CLINICAL PRACTICE LOP

  * 

9. RISK RATING

  * Low

10. NATIONAL STANDARD
DEVELOPMENTAL DYSPLASIA OF THE HIP SCREENING  cont’d

11. REFERENCES


12. ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCC</td>
<td>Newborn Care Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDH</td>
<td>Developmental dysplasia of the hip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Revised Date Person

REVISION & APPROVAL HISTORY

Endorsed Neonatal Services Division Quality Committee

FOR REVIEW: OCTOBER 2019
Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip
Examination & Assessment of Risk Factors

High risk
- Breech presentation
- DDH in a first degree relative

Other risk factors
- Female
- Foot deformities (including postural talipes)
- Oligohydramnios
- Torticollis
- Birth weight >4 kg

Mandatory Hip Examination for All Infants

Normal Examination

Subluxable” or “Clicky”

Review by level 2 fellow/consultant
Hip US at 6 weeks
Neonatal Clinic

No Hip Abduction or Dislocatable Hips

Review by level 2 fellow/consultant
Ultrasound <1 week
Physio review
Orthopaedics consult

High Risk

Hip US at 6 weeks
Neonatal Clinic

Discuss screening with level 2 fellow/consultant

Other Risk Factors

>1 Risk Factor

Note Risk Factor in Blue Book
Recommend repeat examination at 6 weeks

1 Risk Factor

No Risk Factors

No specific follow up
Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip
Ultrasound Screening

NB. This flow diagram must be used in conjunction with a clinical examination. If any hip cannot be abducted or is dislocatable, call Sydney Children’s Hospital orthopaedic registrar and request urgent review

6 week ultrasound

- Femoral head coverage >50% & normal acetabulum
  - No further investigation
    - Follow up by GP or primary care provider

- Femoral head coverage 40-50% OR mildly dysplastic acetabulum
  - Repeat ultrasound at 4 months
    - No dysplasia on either ultrasound
      - Femoral head coverage >50%
        - Notify SCH orthopaedic registrar
          - Fax referral letter
          - Arrange follow up imaging as recommended by orthopaedic team
          - Follow up either in neonatal clinic or orthopaedic outpatients at discretion of orthopaedic team
    - Mild dysplasia on either ultrasound
      - Femoral head coverage 40-50%
    - Hip XR at 6 months
      - Femoral head coverage <40% OR mod/severe dysplastic acetabulum
        - Notify SCH orthopaedic registrar & fax a referral letter
        - Follow up by orthopaedic team

- Femoral head coverage <40% OR mod/severe dysplastic acetabulum