

The Clinical Utility of Perinatal Toxicology Testing

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Improving Care for Opioid-Exposed Newborns (ICON) Annual Statewide Conference Perinatal Quality Collaborative Vermont – April 9, 2024



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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants should be able to:

- 1. Explain the differences in approaches to screening and testing for perinatal substance use
- Understand the unique social and legal consequences of perinatal toxicology testing
- 3. Review principles of obtaining and documenting consent for toxicology
- 4. Describe disparities in the use of perinatal toxicology testing at delivery
- 5. Identify clinical scenarios where neonatal toxicology testing can inform clinical management
- Advocate for evidence-informed, equity-based toxicology testing guidelines for newborns

Core Values

Parents who use drugs should be treated with dignity and respect when they seek care for themselves and their children.

Parenting is hard, and non-punitive approaches that allow the parent, infant, dyad, and family to thrive should be promoted.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility





Case:

27 y/o Black woman, G2P1 → 2, with history of stimulant and opioid use disorder in sustained remission on methadone, but with positive immunoassay toxicology test 6 weeks before delivery for amphetamines, parent does not endorse non-prescribed use at that time. Vaginal delivery at 39 weeks, baby boy w/ APGARS 8/9. Parent was motivated to breastfeed as she heard it can reduce the severity of neonatal opioid withdrawal.

- Hospital policy (2014) was to not support breastfeeding for dyads with third trimester substance use
- Parent breastfed her newborn despite hospital policy
- Child protective services was called, separated mom and baby
- Discharged home in foster care after prolonged treatment course for neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome





Many lingering questions from this case...

- What was the evidence informing that breastfeeding guideline?
- How frequently are toxicology test results false positives?
- What is the clinical utility of toxicology testing in the perinatal period?
- Did the parent harm their infant by offering him breastmilk that day?
- Would the same result have happened if this family was not Black?
- How could all of this have been prevented?





Key Definitions

- **Screening**: use of a validated screening instrument or therapeutic dialogue to elicit information about substance use
 - E.g. NIDA Quick Screen, 4 P's.
- Toxicology Testing: collection of urine/serum/meconium to measure capture presence of substances and/or metabolites present at a particular point in time
- Reporting: referral to Child Protective Services for concern for child abuse/neglect







Common Types of Perinatal Toxicology Testing

	Urine	Meconium	Umbilical Cord
Year developed	1971	1989	2006
Collection	Moderate	Moderate	Easy
Typical turn around time	<4hrs	2-5d	1-4d
Window of Detection	Short (3-4d)	Long (14wks gestation)	Intermediate (20wks gestation)
Drug Concentrations	Moderate	High	Low

(Montgomery, 2006; Ostrea, 1989; Hadland, 2016)





Key Points about Toxicology Testing

- Urine toxicology testing measures recent(ish) exposure cannabis and fentanyl metabolites can linger for weeks
- Most urine tests performed (quick cup, immunoassays) are are not definitive and should be sent for confirmatory testing
- Many umbilical cord and meconium testing results do not come back <u>until after</u> the newborn has been discharged



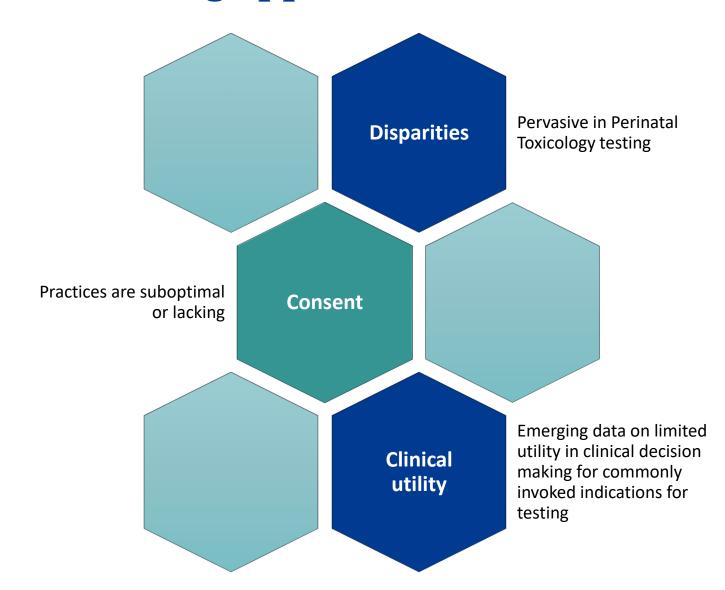


Key Points about Toxicology Testing

- Urine toxicology testing measures recent(ish) exposure –
 cannabis and fentanyl metabolites can linger for weeks
- Most urine tests performed (quick cup, immunoassays) are are not definitive and should be sent for confirmatory testing
- Many umbilical cord and meconium testing results do not come back until the newborn has been discharged
- Testing does NOT quantify dose, frequency, or duration of exposure, or if a parent has a substance use disorder
- A toxicology test is NOT a parenting test



Why are many hospital systems and state PQC's re-evaluating perinatal tox testing approaches now?







Disparities in Perinatal Toxicology Testing



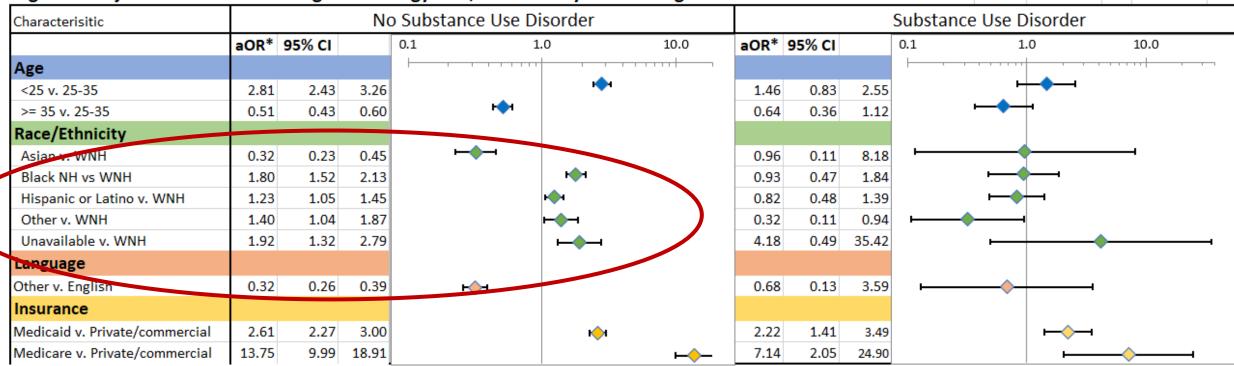


Toxicology Testing is Inequitably Utilized at Delivery

Disparities in Maternal-Infant Drug Testing, Social Work Assessment, and Custody at 5 Hospitals

Samuel Cohen, MD; Timothy Nielsen, MPH; Joseph H. Chou, MD, PhD; Bettina Hoeppner, PhD; Kathleen J. Koenigs, MD; Sarah N. Bernstein, MD; Nicole A. Smith, MD, MPH; Nicola Perlman, MD; Leela Sarathy, MD; Timothy Wilens, MD; Mishka Terplan, MD, MPH; Davida M. Schiff, MD, MSc

Figure 1. Adjusted Odds of Receiving a Toxicology Test, Stratified by ICD-10 Diagnosis of Substance Use Disoder



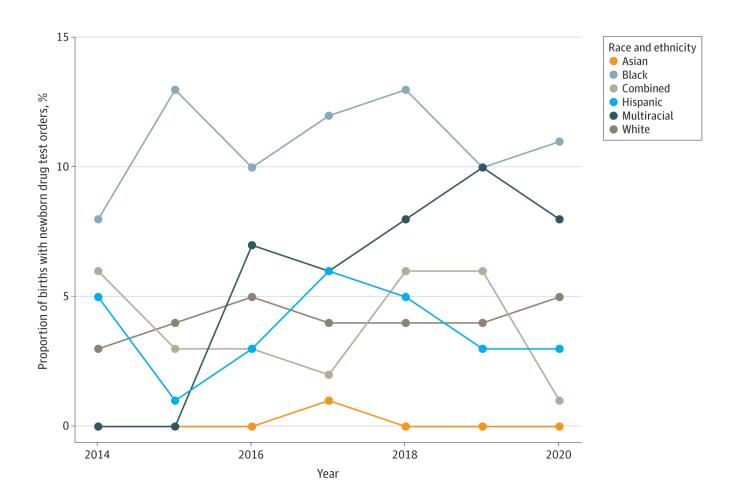
aOR = adjusted Odds Ratio

^{*}Model adjusted for year, hospital, and all variables listed above





Newborns born to Black birthing people were more likely to have toxicology testing performed than newborns born to White parents



In a retrospective cohort study births at an academic center in Michigan from 2014 to 2020, clinicians were more likely to order drug tests for Black newborns (7.3%) compared with White newborns (1.9%) and other racial and ethnic groups





Disproportionate Toxicology Testing and CPS Reporting Practices in a California NICU

THE JOURNAL OF PEDIATRICS • www.jpeds.com





Structural Racism Operationalized via Adverse Social Events in a Single-Center Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Kayla L. Karvonen, MD^{1,2}, Erica Anunwah, MD¹, Brittany D. Chambers Butcher, PhD, MPH^{2,3}, Lydia Kwarteng, BS, MPH⁴, Tameyah Mathis-Perry, BS⁵, Monica R. McLemore, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN⁶, Sally Oh, BS⁴, Matthew S. Pantell, MD, MS^{1,2}, Olga Smith, MS, RN, CCRN⁷, and Elizabeth Rogers, MD^{1,2}

Table III. Odds of social adverse events l	by race and ethnicity**
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CPS referral		ral	Infant urine toxicology screen		Any adverse event	
Raced and ethnicities [‡]	OR (95% CI)	P value	OR (95% CI)	P value	OR (95% CI)	P value
American Indian and Alaska Native Asian	15.8 (6.9-36.0) 0.2 (0.1-0.5)	<.001 0.002	7.6 (3.4-17.2) 0.2 (0.1-0.4)	<.001 <.001	10.2 (4.7-21.9) 0.2 (0.1-0.5)	<.001 <.001
Black	3.6 (2.2-6.1)	<.001	2.2 (1.4-3.5)	.001	3.5 (2.4-5.2)	<.001
Latinx Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander White	1.3 (0.8-2.0) s Referent group	.33 s	0.7 (0.5-1.1) 1.0 (0.2-4.2) Referent group	0.14 1.0	0.9 (0.6-1.3) 1.3 (0.4-4.4) Referent group	0.60 .66

Bold typeface indicates statistical significance P < .05.

SUnable to run effect estimate secondary to small sample size.



[&]quot;Adjusted for length of stay.

[†]Outcomes with <50 events were excluded from analysis.

^{‡&}quot;Other" race and ethnicity excluded owing to small sample size.

Consent for Toxicology Testing



Guidelines stipulate clinicians should obtain informed consent prior to toxicology testing in pregnancy















ACOG Committee Opinion No. 711, 2017; ASAM, 2017; SAMHSA; Ecker et al. AJOG 2019; Charlestown v. City of Ferguson, 2001



Maternal Toxicology Consent Poorly Documented at 5 Hospitals in Massachusetts

Original Research



Informed consent is poorly documented when obtaining toxicology testing at delivery in a Massachusetts cohort



Kathleen J. Koenigs, MD; Joseph H. Chou, MD, PhD; Samuel Cohen, MD; Moira Nolan, BA; Gina Liu, MSc; Mishka Terplan, MD, MPH; Brian M. Cummings, MD; Timothy Nielsen, MPH; Nicole A. Smith, MD, MPH; Joseph Distefano, BS; Sarah N. Bernstein, MD; Davida M. Schiff, MD, MSc

1562 Maternal Tox Tests

1067 (68.3%)
Documentation
Mentions Tox
Test Obtained

930 (62.7%) Indication documented 4686 (29.8%) Documented Consent

Verbal consent documented in *fewer than 30% of cases*

Koenigs, 2022





Random Sample of <u>Infant</u> @ MGH with Similarly Low Rates of Documented Consent

172 Infant Urine or Mec Tox
Tests

159 (92.4%)
Documentation
Mentions Tox
Test Obtained

46 (24.4%)
Documented
Consent

Preliminary MGH QI Data, 2021





Components of **informed consent**



Explicit clarification for the provider and patient about the goal of testing



Discussion of who will have access to the results



Review of ramifications of a positive test



Describe the right for a person to refuse testing, and the limits on refusal (for minors)

Written consent preferred for accountability, as an educational tool, and patient preference





Utility of Toxicology Testing



Original Research



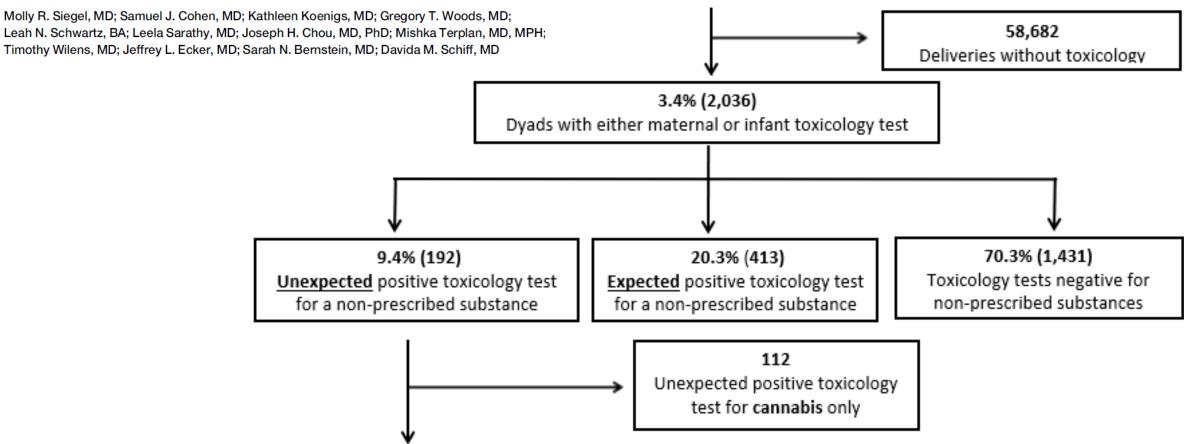
3.9% (80/2,036) Unexpected positive toxicology test for a non-

prescribed substance other than cannabis

Assessing the clinical utility of toxicology testing in the peripartum period

Molly R. Siegel, MD; Samuel J. Cohen, MD; Kathleen Koenigs, MD; Gregory T. Woods, MD; Leah N. Schwartz, BA; Leela Sarathy, MD; Joseph H. Chou, MD, PhD; Mishka Terplan, MD, MPH;

60,718 Deliveries between 4/2016-4/2020





Unexpected Positive Drug Testing by Testing Rationale

Clinical Rationale for Test	Unexpected Positive Results, n (%)					
High Yield Indications						
History of Recent SUD (within past 2 yrs) (N=422)	45 (10.7%)					
Inadequate Prenatal Care (N=154)	9 (5.8%)					
Maternal MOUD w/o active SUD in past 2 yrs (N=159)	6 (3.8%)					
Medium Yield Indications						
Maternal Medical Indications (N=351)	8 (2.3%)					
History of SUD, in remission >2yrs (N = 159)	1 (1.7%)					
Maternal Cannabis Use (N=699)	11 (1.6%)					
Low Yield Indications						
Monitoring for Controlled Substance Rx (N=37)	0 (0%)					
Infant Clinical Presentation (N=69)	0 (0%)					
Other/Unknown (N=83)	0 (0%)					
TOTAL (N=2036)	80 (3.9%)					



What are the reasons to perform a newborn toxicology test?

- Will it benefit the patient?
- Will it change disposition/anticipatory guidance?
- [Will it change the need for social work or child protective services (CPS) consultation?]





Meconium and Umbilical Cord Toxicology testing are often opioid negative in clinically diagnosed NOWS

Clinical Biochemistry 50 (2017) 1093–1097

Table 2
NAS diagnosis with an opioid positive meconium test result.

					Percent
Meconium		NAS ICD9		Sensitivity	65
		Positive	Negative	Specificity	85
Opioid test result	Positive Negative	65 35	47 260	PPV NPV	58 88

Table 3
NAS diagnosis with an opioid positive umbilical cord test result.

					Percent
Umbilical Cord Tiss	sue	NAS ICD1	0	Sensitivity	79
		Positive	Negative	Specificity	76
Opioid test result	Positive Negative	75 20	177 559	PPV NPV	30 97



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Clinical Biochemistry

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/clinbiochem



Method performance and clinical workflow outcomes associated with meconium and umbilical cord toxicology testing



Ruth M. Labardee^a, Jaime R. Swartzwelder^b, Karen E. Gebhardt^b, Justine A. Pardi^b, Anna C. Dawsey^c, R. Brent Dixon^d, Steven W. Cotten^b,*

- 35% of all cases of ICD-Dx NOWS were opioid negative in meconium toxicology testing
- 21% of all cases of ICD-Dx NOWS were opioid negative in umbilical cord tissue testing

Maternal Urine Drug Testing More Beneficial for Predicting Neonatal Outcomes Compared with **Umbilical Cord Testing** RNAL OF MATERNAL-FETAL & NEONATAL MEDICINE

https://doi.org/10.1080/14767058.2023.2211706



ORIGINAL ARTICLE



Can umbilical cord testing add to maternal urine drug screen for evaluation of infants at risk of neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome?

Hannah Gersch^a, Darshan Shah^a, Alyson Chroust^b and Beth Bailey^{a,c}

	Dyads with Positive Maternal Urine Tox at Delivery (n=572)	Dyads with Positive Umbilical Cord Testing at Delivery (n=353)	Dyads with Both Positive (n=202)
NOWS Diagnosis	5.62 (3.06-10.33)	2.58 (1.60-4.15)	1.91 (1.03-3.56)

		Umbilical Cord and Maternal	Negative Agreement Between Umbilical Cord and Maternal Urine Drug Testing	
All Opioids	202	12.9%	97.1%	<0.001





How did unexpected toxicology results (n=80) affect decision making at delivery?

(n) % of changes in type of management	Highest Yield Clinical Rationales	Med Yield Clinical Rationales	Total
Maternal Counseling	23 (38.3%)	10 (50.0%)	33 (41.3%)
NOWS Management	12 (20.0%)	6 (30.0%)	18 (22.8%)
Breastfeeding	10 (16.4%)	7 (36.8%)	17 (21.3%)
CPS Reporting	23 (37.7%)	11 (57.9)	34 (42.5%)
Change in Parental Custody at Discharge	16 (26.7%)	2 (10.0%)	18 (22.5%)

In 18 of 60,712 deliveries, an unexpected toxicology test resulted in a custody change at discharge (0.03%)



Infant toxicology testing should be completed when it informs clinical management

- Concerns of chronic opioid exposure in utero AND no screening nor testing of the birthing person available → determine need for appropriate observation period
- Unexpected symptoms manifest which could be consistent with withdrawal and are unresponsive to nonpharmacologic care (ESC) → determine appropriate pharmacologic intervention
- Meconium testing has limited clinical benefit
 - In the era of ESC, successful treatment usually does not hinge on rapid identification of specific substance exposure
 - Need for accurate data on substance use during pregnancy as a public health metric is not contingent on clinically performed biochemical testing





Current National Professional Society Guidelines



Professional Society Recommendations around Perinatal Toxicology testing

American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology/Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine (2017, 2019)

- Universal verbal screening as first-line tool to diagnose substance use disorder in pregnancy
- "Urine drug testing should only be undertaken when it benefits outweigh any harms"
- Consent for urine drug testing
- Explicit criteria for urine drug testing to avoid bias and discrimination

American Society of Addiction Medicine (in addition to above) (2023)

- Right of refusal and refusing a toxicology test should neither be seen as indication of use nor detract from clinical care
- Confirmatory testing should be utilized
- A positive test is not determinative of a SUD
- Parents should be made aware of newborn toxicology testing and whenever possible permission should be obtain
- Infant meconium and umbilical cord testing lack clinical utility and are not recommended



Professional Society Recommendations around Perinatal Toxicology testing

American Academy of Pediatrics – NOWS Clinical Report, 2020

"Pediatricians should be aware of and reduce institutional biases in implementing universal toxicology testing for infants, which could result in unequal consequences for mothers and infants on the basis of race, ethnicity, and/or socioeconomic status."

"Infant toxicology testing should be completed when it will inform clinical management. In some instances, testing of the infant provides no additional clinical information and would not be recommended."





Addressing commonly asked questions when considering reducing neonatal toxicology testing



What is the value added in obtaining newborn urine toxicology testing in addition to birthing person test at delivery?

- 1573 pregnancies where all birthing person and newborns were testing
- After removing medications dispensed during delivery hospitalization:
 - Positive Predictive
 Value 61.3%
 - Negative Predictive
 Value 100%





Concordance and discordance between maternal and newborn drug test results

Katrina Mark, MD, FACOG; Lauren Pace, MS; Sarah M. Temkin, MD; Sarah Crimmins, MD; Mishka Terplan, MD, MPH





Epistemic Injustice: Harm from not trusting our patients

Test or Talk

Empiric Bias and Epistemic Injustice



Mishka Terplan, MD, MPH

"When we listen to the drug test and not the patient, we perpetuate a mistaken empiricism—one that falsely elevates the value of information collected from measurement over the value of information collected from a person. This is an epistemic injustice—a harm done by devaluing a person's credibility and undermining them as a giver of knowledge. The neglect, silence, or erasure of the patient's voice and perspective harms not only them, but it also harms us as physicians—it deflates us in our capacity to know and to heal. To be blunt: dehumanizing people makes their care environment unsafe, and to expect people to be forthcoming about sensitive and potentially catastrophic information under such circumstances is irrational."

Terplan, Obstetrics and Gynecology, 2022



So what do we do if a parent declines testing?

Clinical Decision Making	Birthing person/infant	Is there an alternate approach?
Concern for altered mental status	Birthing Person	Supportive Management
Will it aide in maternal counselling and referral to SUD treatment?	Birthing Person	Verbal Screening
Will it aide in the management of withdrawal symptoms?	Infant	Monitoring infant for clinical s/s
Will it aide in the discussion of breastfeeding recommendations?	Dyad	Universal precautions for breastfeeding recs
Does the result aide in meeting mandated reporting requirements?	Dyad	Assessment of infant safety risks, psychosocial screening



Is toxicology testing needed to inform anticipatory

guidance?

- Safety considerations in the home
- Recommendations for human milk
- Discussions around safe sleep
- Other harm reduction strategies

<u>Information to know about</u> breastmilk and substance use



Have you thought about breastfeeding or providing your breast milk? If you are interested, please talk to your care team.

What are the benefits of breastfeeding?

- · Soothing your baby
- May reduce the need for medications for newborn withdrawal
- Decreasing infections in infancy
- Providing nutrition to your baby
- Increasing bonding between you and your baby
- Lowering your risk of postpartum depression and other diseases

What are the risks of breastfeeding if I have recently used non-prescribed drugs?

- You may not be able to safely respond to your baby's cues
- Your breastmilk may contain substances or contaminants from the drug supply that can harm your baby

Breastfeeding is not recommended if you are actively using non-prescribed drugs.

What about other conditions or medications?

- Medications for opioid use disorder (methadone, buprenorphine, Suboxone) are safe with breastfeeding
- It is safe to breastfeed with Hepatitis C, unless you have cracked or bleeding nipples
- You can breastfeed if you smoke cigarettes or vape, but try to minimize how much smoke or vapor your baby is exposed to
- Other conditions? Please talk to your care team

What if I plan to stop using nonprescribed drugs?

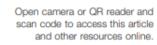
- It may take 3-4 days until substances are no longer present in your breastmilk
- If you need to wait to provide breastmilk, you can pump to maintain your supply until it is safe to breastfeed
- Drug testing may be useful to see what level of substance remains in your body
- Your care team can help you create a relapse plan in case you start using substances again





Breastfeeding is a human right

BREASTFEEDING MEDICINE Volume 17, Number 8, 2022 Mary Ann Liebert, Inc. DOI: 10.1089/bfm.2022.29216.abm



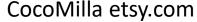


Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Position Statement: Breastfeeding As a Basic Human Right

Lori Feldman-Winter,¹ Trina Van,² Daphna Varadi,² Amanda C. Adams,³ Bahar Kural,⁴ and Elien C.J. Rouw⁵

Moving towards a culture of shared decision making to inform breastfeeding decision making









AND, we need to carefully track balancing measures

- From 2021-2023 at MGH, there have been no cases of:
 - Readmission for NOWS
 - Readmission for intoxication related to breastmilk exposure
 - Readmissions in 30d for new social concerns or non-accidental trauma/maltreatment evaluation





Returning to our Case:

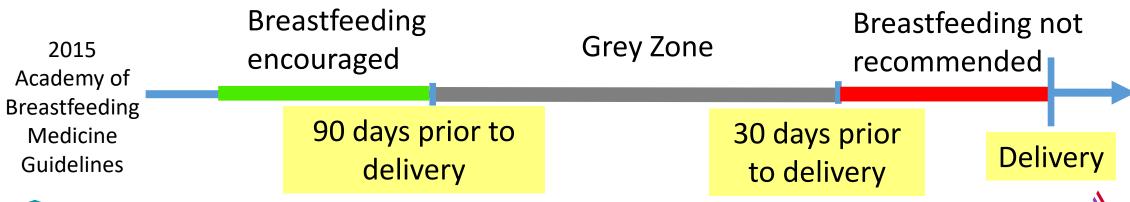
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- Hospital policy (2013) was to not support breastfeeding for dyads with third trimester substance use
- Parent breastfed her newborn despite hospital policy
- Child protective services was called, separated mom and baby
- Discharged home in foster care after prolonged treatment course for neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome



2015 ABM Guidelines restricted breastfeeding to pregnant individuals w/o recent substance use

- •Support breastfeeding for substance-exposed dyads if the mother is:
 - In a substance use treatment program on opioid agonist therapy
 - Receiving consistent prenatal care
 - No medical contraindications to breastfeeding
 - No non-prescribed drug use for a specified time period prior to delivery:





Prenatal Toxicology Testing and Breastfeeding Initiation

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

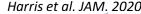


 A single-site retrospective cohort study of 503 women receiving OUD treatment at **Boston Medical Center found** that results of urine drug testing at delivery had the strongest association (aOR 3.72) with ongoing nonprescribed use postpartum

A Retrospective Cohort Study Examining the Utility of Perinatal Urine Toxicology Testing to Guide Breastfeeding Initiation

Miriam Harris, MD, MSc, Kathleen Joseph, MD, Bettina Hoeppner, PhD, MSc, Elisha M. Wachman, MD, Jessica R. Gray, MD, Kelley Saia, MD, Sarah Wakeman, MD, Megan H. Bair-Merritt, MD, MSc, and Davida M. Schiff, MD, MSc

	90-30d before delivery	Within 30d of delivery	At delivery
Sensitivity	44%	26%	27%
Specificity	74%	79%	93%
Pos Predictive Value	36%	36%	56%
Neg Predictive Value	80%	86%	78%
Chi-Squared Test	P =0.033	P=0.006	P<0.001







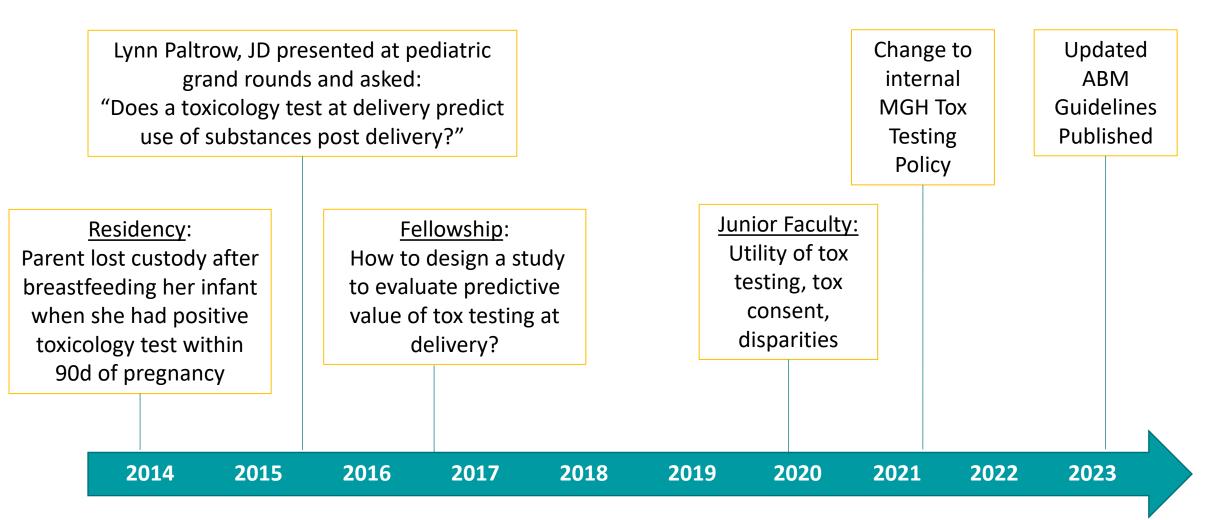








Anatomy of an idea: the long arc of research







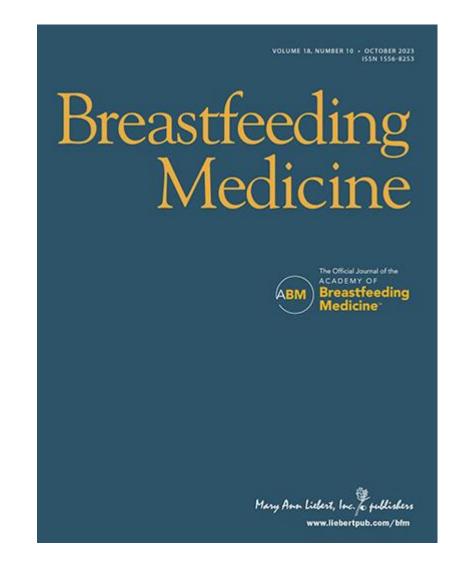
BREASTFEEDING MEDICINE Volume 18, Number 10, 2023 © Mary Ann Liebert, Inc. DOI: 10.1089/bfm.2023.29256.abm ABM Protocol

Open camera or QR reader and scan code to access this article and other resources online.



Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Clinical Protocol #21: Breastfeeding in the Setting of Substance Use and Substance Use Disorder (Revised 2023)

Miriam Harris,^{1,2} Davida M. Schiff,^{3,4} Kelley Saia,^{2,5} Serra Muftu,^{3,4} Katherine R. Standish,⁶ and Elisha M. Wachman^{2,7}







Changes you may wish to make /are making / have made(!) in practice:

- Implement written consent as part of drug testing protocols in the perinatal period
- 2. Review clinical rationales for drug testing, consider removal of low-yield indications
- Reconsider what information is gained from obtaining a neonatal toxicology test, and how it will help guide clinical management
- 4. Adopt updated Academy of Breastfeeding Guidelines promoting breastfeeding for parents without substance use at delivery





THANK YOU!

Questions?

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https://www.massgeneral.org/children/research/prism

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