

Parents' mental well-being, social support, and psychobiology on the Beacon Children's Hospital NICU: Links with parenting and infant neurodevelopment

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Overview. This project is a collaboration between Dr. Gettler's Hormones, Health, and Human Behavior Laboratory at UND and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Beacon Children's Hospital in South Bend, led by Dr. White and NP Monhaut as co-PIs. This UND-NICU collaborative team has been in dialogue for a number of years on how to develop a research project that could help the NICU address pressing health concerns for parents through the strengths of Dr. Gettler's lab group, which is an established leader in research on parental psychobiology, social relationships, and mental well-being. The project also includes Dr. Hinde of Arizona State University, who is a world-leading expert on breastfeeding, hormones & signals in breastmilk, and developmental programming. The proposed longitudinal project will focus on the following mutually beneficial aims that also address existing gaps in the literature:

1) characterize the links between parents' social support received in the NICU and through their personal networks and their mental well-being and psychobiology.

2) test for links between pre- and post-partum psychobiology, mental well-being, and parenting (incl. skin-to-skin care).

3) longitudinally assess the links between parents' psychosocial and psychobiology profiles and infants' later neurodevelopment.