

## Joining forces in times of the pandemic – Global Alliance for Newborn Care launches campaign “Zero separation. Together for better care!”

In cooperation with its international network, the Global Alliance for Newborn Care (GLANCE) which is the global initiative of EFCNI, developed a long-term campaign to support parents of hospitalised newborns and healthcare professionals in neonatal care units with the aim to enable infant and family centred developmental care in line with COVID-19-precautions.

- Worldwide, neonatal units have adopted a separation policy, limiting or prohibiting access of parents to neonatal care units [1]
- Separation can result in long-term health and developmental issues in newborns and impact the mental health of parents [2]
- GLANCE aims to raise awareness for the parents’ and newborns’ needs in times of a pandemic and informs about possibilities to follow a zero separation approach in neonatal units while maintaining precautions and high standards of hygiene
- The campaign provides web-and social media resources that offer information about infant and family centred developmental care in times of COVID-19 and beyond



**Munich, Germany, July 2020:** The global campaign “Zero Separation. Together for better care! Keep preterm and sick babies close to their parents” was launched under the umbrella of GLANCE, a global initiative founded and coordinated by the European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI). The campaign’s goal is to raise awareness for the benefits of zero separation of preterm and sick babies and their parents in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

(NICU). “Since the global spread of the Coronavirus, and the introduction of measures against COVID-19, we saw many parents struggling with the very restricted or even prohibited access to the neonatal intensive care units due to the pandemic. They reached out to us, not only asking for help, but also for information if it was really necessary to keep parents apart from their newborns.”, explains Silke Mader, Chairwoman of EFCNI and founder of GLANCE. In exchange with international healthcare professionals and consulting the recommendations by the World Health Organization (WHO), it appeared that this separation of parents and babies had been decided on no current evidence. In fact, the WHO stated “Mother and infant should be enabled to remain together while rooming-in throughout the day and night and practice skin-to-skin contact, including kangaroo mother care, especially immediately after birth and during establishment of breastfeeding, whether they or their infants have suspected or confirmed COVID-19 virus infection.”[3] There is no question that hospital staff in many places are reaching their limits and the well-being and safety of patients and staff must always come first. Yet, the long-term impact of this separation policy on the newborns’ health outcomes can be tremendous [2], hence the campaign wants to encourage an approach that allows for family centred care when and wherever possible, even in times of a pandemic.

### **About the campaign**

The campaign focuses on six topics such as breastfeeding and human milk, lung diseases e.g. Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), former preterm infants, mental health, discharge from the hospital and the role of fathers and family members. To inform about consequences of parent and child separation, the campaign will shed light on the patients’ and the parents’ view by sharing experience reports from former patients, parents and other relatives. Besides parent- and patient organisations, a significant number of international healthcare professionals and medical societies supports the campaign and provided statements and scientific data underlining the positive effect on long-term health outcomes of zero separation in NICUs. The campaign was developed, following the recommendations of the WHO in regards to the provision of newborn and maternal care in times of COVID-19.

Campaign material is available in more than 20 languages and can be downloaded on [www.glance-network.org](http://www.glance-network.org)

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### **About GLANCE**

GLANCE is a global network that aims at reducing mortality and morbidity of babies born too soon, too small or too sick and to decrease the burden of afflicted families. It collaborates with different stakeholders to address disparities in care and policies. GLANCE develops initiatives to meet the needs of babies and their families. The vision of GLANCE is that every baby born receives the best start in life. Worldwide.

For more information, please visit: [www.glance-network.org/](http://www.glance-network.org/)

### **About EFCNI**

The European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI) is the first pan-European organisation and network to represent the interests of preterm and newborn infants and their families. It brings together parents, healthcare experts from different disciplines, and scientists with the common goal of improving long-term health of preterm and newborn children. EFCNI's vision is to ensure the best start in life for every baby.

For more information please visit: [www.efcni.org](http://www.efcni.org)

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### **References:**

[1] World Health Organization, Maintaining essential health services: operational guidance for the COVID-19 context, 1 June 2020, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/10665-332240> (24.06.2020).

[2] World Health Organization, Clinical management of COVID-19: interim guidance, 27 March 2020, p.43 <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/clinical-management-of-covid-19> (25.06.2020).

[3] Guttmacher Institute, Estimates of the Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, Vol.46, 2020, p 73-76, <https://www.guttmacher.org/journals/ipsrh/2020/04/estimates-potential-impact-covid-19-pandemic-sexual-and-reproductive-health> (25.06.2020).