

## Research Explained

### **Variation in care practices across pediatric acute care cardiology units: Results of the Pediatric Acute Care Cardiology Collaborative (PAC<sup>3</sup>) hospital survey**

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### About this Study

#### Why is this study important?

- This was the first study from the Pediatric Acute Care Cardiology Collaborative (PAC<sup>3</sup>). It involved a survey, as a baseline, to understand the unit composition across hospitals. The acute care cardiology unit (ACCU) is a unit outside of the intensive care unit that cares for pediatric and congenital cardiac patients.
- It is important to understand differences between hospitals before we begin to compare outcomes from the PAC<sup>3</sup> data registry (initiated in Feb. 2019). Before this study, variability between centers had not been described.
- ACCU characteristics asked about in the survey and described in the study include unit size, types of patients cared for on the unit, staffing models, resources and treatments available, and standardized care practices.

#### How was this study performed?

- An online survey was sent to all PAC<sup>3</sup> centers with 126 questions on their ACCU and five supplemental questions related to their cardiac acute care unit.

#### What were the results of the research?

- 31 out of 34 centers (91%) completed the survey.
- Most cardiology patients receive care on an acute care cardiology-specific floor.
- Advanced practice providers (APP) are employed on most ACCUs. An APP is a nurse with a graduate degree in advanced practice nursing. They work closely with a team of medical professionals to provide the highest level of evidence-based care for infants, children, adolescents, and young adults with life-threatening illnesses.
- The respiratory support available on ACCUs differs between hospitals.
- Admission practices for “interstage” patients (patients who are between the first and second surgery for staged treatment of single ventricle physiology) differ between hospitals.

- Many ACCUs are working on similar quality improvement projects related to the care of their patients.

**What are the limitations of this study?**

- Surveys were only obtained from hospitals participating in PAC<sup>3</sup>.
- Survey results may not represent non-PAC<sup>3</sup> institutions.

**What is the impact of this study?**

- The hospital survey helps describe the systems and care practices at PAC<sup>3</sup> institutions.
- The study confirms and describes the many differences that exist in resources available on the ACCU.
- Comparing differences between centers may help to identify best practices, improve the quality of care provided across hospitals participating in PAC<sup>3</sup>, and allow for opportunities for shared learning between centers.