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Transient Tachypnea of the Newborn (TTN): Pathophysiology, Clinical Manifestations, Diagnosis, Management, and Nursing Care.

Eidah Mansour Ayed Alazmi[(1)] , Saud Salem Albalawi[(2)] , Abdullah Makki Ali Alsumyl[(3)] , Ashgah Mashosh Alghamdi[(4)] , Khaled Mohammed Abed Al Ruwaili[(5)] , Fahad Yahya Gassim Alfaifi[(6)] , Jawaher Madshoush Alghamdi[(7)] , Ashwag Hassan Mohammed Asiri[(8)] , Jumana Saeed Saeed Alghamdi[(9)] , Amal Mohammad Aldossari[(10)] , Hassan Mohammed M. Alotaibi[(11)] , Melaf Mohammed Alotaibi[(12)]

(1)Manfouha Primary Healthcare Center, Ministry of Health, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia
(2)Al Badrani Primary Healthcare Center, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia
(3)King Fahd Central Hospital, Jazan Health Cluster,Ministry of Health, Jazan, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia
(4)Kara Al-Ha'it Primary Healthcare Center, Ministry of Health, Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia
(5)King Khalid Hospital, Al-Kharj, First Health Cluster, and Al-Hayathim Primary Healthcare Center,Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia
(6)Eastern Health Sector, Faifa, Jazan,Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia
(7)Jaw Primary Healthcare Center,Ministry of Health, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia
(8)Jaw Al-Baltain Primary Healthcare Center, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia
(9)Al-Baitha Primary Healthcare Center, Al-Baha, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia
(10)King Salman Hospital, Ministry of Health, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia
(11)Al-Dawadmi General Hospital, Ministry of Health, Al-Dawadmi, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia
(12)Manfouha Primary Healthcare Center, Riyadh, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Background: Transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTN) is one of the most common causes of respiratory distress during the neonatal period. It primarily affects term and late-preterm infants and results from delayed clearance of fetal lung fluid following delivery. Although TTN is generally self-limiting, affected newborns may require respiratory support, continuous monitoring, and specialized neonatal care to maintain adequate oxygenation and prevent complications.

Aim: This review aims to provide an overview of the epidemiology, etiology, pathophysiology, clinical manifestations, diagnostic evaluation, treatment, prognosis, complications, and nursing management of TTN, emphasizing the role of nurses in early recognition and effective neonatal care.

Methods: A narrative review approach was adopted to examine available literature addressing the clinical and nursing aspects of TTN. Relevant information concerning maternal and neonatal risk factors, pulmonary fluid clearance mechanisms, diagnostic investigations, respiratory support strategies, feeding management, and potential complications was reviewed and synthesized.

Results: TTN primarily develops because of delayed absorption of fetal lung fluid, resulting in reduced pulmonary compliance, increased respiratory effort, and impaired gas exchange. Important risk factors include cesarean delivery without labor, prematurity, maternal diabetes, and maternal obesity. Diagnosis relies on clinical assessment supported by pulse oximetry, chest radiography, and lung ultrasonography. Management is primarily supportive and may include supplemental oxygen, continuous positive airway pressure, fluid management, and appropriate nutritional support. Most affected newborns recover within 24–72 hours without long-term complications.

Conclusion: Early identification, appropriate respiratory monitoring, and evidence-based supportive management are essential for favorable neonatal outcomes. Nurses play a central role in assessing respiratory function, preventing complications, supporting feeding, and educating parents.

Keywords: Transient tachypnea of the newborn; neonatal respiratory distress; pulmonary fluid clearance; respiratory support; neonatal nursing; newborn care.

Introduction

Transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTN) is one of the most common causes of respiratory distress during the neonatal period. It is a respiratory condition characterized by rapid breathing resulting from delayed clearance of fetal lung fluid after birth. TTN primarily affects term and late-preterm neonates and usually develops within the first two hours of life. The condition is generally self-limiting and resolves within 24–72 hours with appropriate supportive management. However, affected infants require careful assessment and continuous monitoring to prevent complications and distinguish TTN from other potentially serious neonatal respiratory

*Corresponding author eidahmansour@gmail.com (Eidah Mansour Ayed Alazmi).
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disorders. During fetal development, the lungs contain fluid that supports normal lung growth and development. At birth, this fluid must be rapidly absorbed through pulmonary epithelial sodium channels and removed through lymphatic and circulatory pathways to allow effective air exchange. In some newborns, this physiological transition is delayed, resulting in excessive fluid accumulation within the pulmonary interstitial spaces. The retained fluid decreases pulmonary compliance, increases airway resistance, and interferes with normal gas exchange. Consequently, the newborn develops tachypnea and varying degrees of respiratory distress. Although the exact mechanisms are multifactorial, impaired sodium transport and insufficient hormonal stimulation during labor are considered important contributors to delayed pulmonary fluid absorption [1][2][3].

Several maternal and neonatal factors increase the risk of developing TTN. Cesarean delivery without labor is among the most significant risk factors because the absence of labor-related hormonal changes may interfere with fetal lung fluid clearance. Other recognized risk factors include late prematurity, maternal diabetes mellitus, male sex, maternal asthma, and perinatal complications. Infants delivered before 39 weeks of gestation may have an increased risk because their pulmonary fluid clearance mechanisms may not be fully mature. Understanding these risk factors is important for nurses and other healthcare professionals involved in maternal and neonatal care, particularly when identifying newborns who require closer observation following delivery. The clinical manifestations of TTN commonly include respiratory rates exceeding 60 breaths per minute, nasal flaring, mild intercostal or subcostal retractions, and expiratory grunting. Symptoms generally appear shortly after birth and may persist for several hours or days. Diagnosis is primarily based on clinical assessment, supported by chest radiography and, when available, lung ultrasonography. Chest radiographs may demonstrate pulmonary hyperinflation, prominent pulmonary vascular markings, and fluid accumulation within the interlobar fissures. Healthcare professionals must differentiate TTN from neonatal respiratory distress syndrome, congenital pneumonia, meconium aspiration syndrome, and other conditions that require specific treatment.

Management is primarily supportive and focuses on maintaining adequate oxygenation, monitoring respiratory function, and providing appropriate nutritional and fluid support. Supplemental oxygen may be required when oxygen saturation decreases, while continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) can be considered for infants experiencing increased respiratory effort. Most newborns recover without long-term complications. Nevertheless, persistent or worsening respiratory distress requires further investigation and possible escalation of care. Nursing care plays a central role in the management of TTN. Nurses are responsible for monitoring respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, heart rate, temperature, and signs of respiratory deterioration. They also assess feeding tolerance, maintain thermoregulation, administer prescribed oxygen therapy, and support parents by explaining the condition and expected recovery. Early recognition, accurate documentation, infection prevention, and effective communication with the neonatal healthcare team contribute to safe patient outcomes. This review discusses the epidemiology, etiology, pathophysiology, clinical manifestations, diagnostic approaches, treatment, complications, and nursing management of TTN, emphasizing the importance of evidence-based nursing interventions in promoting neonatal respiratory stability and supporting recovery [1][2][3].

Etiology:

The primary cause of transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTN) is delayed clearance of fetal lung fluid following delivery. During fetal development, the lungs are filled with fluid that plays an essential role in normal pulmonary growth. At birth, this fluid must be rapidly removed to allow the lungs to expand and establish effective gas exchange. Normally, pulmonary fluid clearance occurs through the coordinated activity of pulmonary epithelial cells, lymphatic drainage, and pulmonary circulation. A physiological transition takes place in the pulmonary epithelium, shifting from chloride secretion to active sodium absorption through epithelial sodium channels. This process facilitates the movement of fluid from the alveolar spaces into the pulmonary interstitium and subsequently into the bloodstream and lymphatic system. The release of catecholamines during labor stimulates sodium absorption and promotes fetal lung fluid clearance. However, when this process is delayed or insufficient, residual fluid accumulates within the alveoli and pulmonary interstitial tissues. This accumulation reduces lung compliance, increases airway resistance, and interferes with normal oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange. Consequently, the newborn develops rapid breathing and varying degrees of respiratory distress. Cesarean delivery without labor is particularly associated with TTN because infants delivered without exposure to labor-related hormonal stimulation may experience delayed pulmonary fluid absorption.

Several maternal factors contribute to the development of TTN. Maternal diabetes mellitus, particularly gestational diabetes, is an established risk factor because altered fetal metabolic and hormonal conditions may interfere with normal pulmonary maturation and fluid clearance. Maternal asthma and preexisting pulmonary disorders have also been associated with an increased risk. Furthermore, maternal intrahepatic cholestasis has recently received attention as a potential risk factor. Increased

maternal serum bile acid concentrations may influence fetal pulmonary function and contribute to respiratory complications following birth [1][2][3]. Neonatal and fetal characteristics also influence the likelihood of developing TTN. Gestational age below 39 weeks is associated with increased susceptibility because pulmonary fluid clearance mechanisms may not be fully mature. Male newborns appear to have a higher incidence than females. Both small-for-gestational-age and large-for-gestational-age infants may demonstrate increased susceptibility. Additionally, perinatal asphyxia may interfere with normal cardiopulmonary adaptation and contribute to delayed fluid absorption. Emerging research has identified other potential risk modifiers, including low maternal and neonatal vitamin D concentrations. Vitamin D may contribute to fetal lung development and pulmonary epithelial function. However, further research is required to establish whether these associations represent independent risk factors. Identifying maternal, fetal, and neonatal risk factors is important for nurses and healthcare professionals because it supports early identification, appropriate monitoring, and timely intervention in newborns at increased risk of TTN.

Epidemiology

Transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTN) is considered the most common cause of respiratory distress among neonates, accounting for a substantial proportion of respiratory complications occurring during the early neonatal period. It affects both term and preterm infants, although its incidence varies according to gestational age, delivery method, maternal characteristics, and associated perinatal conditions. Epidemiological reports estimate that TTN affects approximately 7% to 10% of newborns in some populations. However, considerable variation exists between studies because of differences in diagnostic criteria, population characteristics, and healthcare settings [1]. The incidence of TTN is inversely related to gestational age, meaning that the likelihood of developing the condition increases as gestational age decreases. For example, approximately 10% of infants born at 33–34 weeks of gestation may develop TTN, compared with approximately 5% of those born at 35–36 weeks. The reported incidence decreases to less than 1% among infants born at 37 weeks or later in some epidemiological studies [2][3][4]. Despite the higher incidence among late-preterm infants, a considerable proportion of TTN cases occur in term newborns because term deliveries represent a larger proportion of total births. These findings highlight the importance of gestational maturity in normal pulmonary adaptation following delivery.

Mode of delivery is another important epidemiological determinant. Cesarean section, particularly elective cesarean delivery performed before the onset of labor, is strongly associated with an increased incidence of TTN. During spontaneous labor, hormonal changes stimulate the release of catecholamines, which promote the absorption of fetal lung fluid through pulmonary epithelial sodium channels. When cesarean delivery occurs without labor, this physiological stimulation may be reduced, resulting in delayed pulmonary fluid clearance and an increased risk of respiratory distress [5][6]. Several maternal and neonatal characteristics have also been associated with increased TTN incidence. Maternal obesity and diabetes mellitus are recognized maternal risk factors that may influence fetal pulmonary development and neonatal adaptation. Male newborns have a higher reported incidence than female newborns. Furthermore, both small-for-gestational-age and large-for-gestational-age infants may have an increased susceptibility to TTN because of differences in fetal growth, metabolic conditions, and perinatal adaptation [7]. From a clinical and nursing perspective, understanding the epidemiology of TTN is essential for identifying newborns who require closer respiratory observation following delivery. Particular attention should be given to late-preterm infants, newborns delivered by elective cesarean section, and infants born to mothers with diabetes or obesity. Early identification of these risk groups supports timely assessment, appropriate monitoring, and prompt supportive management, potentially reducing unnecessary investigations and preventing delays in recognizing more serious neonatal respiratory disorders.

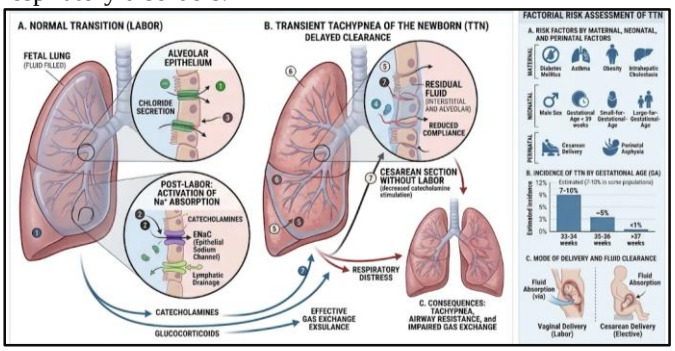


Figure-1: Etiology and Epidemiology of TTN.

Pathophysiology

Fetal lung fluid plays an essential role in normal pulmonary development, lung growth, and preparation for postnatal respiratory function. During fetal life, the lungs are not responsible for gas exchange because oxygen and carbon dioxide are exchanged through the placenta. Instead, the pulmonary epithelium continuously produces and secretes fluid into the developing alveolar spaces. This process begins at approximately six weeks of gestation, with fluid production estimated at 2 mL/kg/hour during early development and increasing to approximately 5 mL/kg/hour by term. Fluid secretion primarily occurs through active chloride transport across pulmonary epithelial cells, while sodium and water follow passively through osmotic

mechanisms. The presence of this fluid maintains the lungs in an expanded state, supports normal airway development, and contributes to the volume of amniotic fluid [8][9][10]. As pregnancy approaches term, fetal lung fluid production gradually decreases in preparation for birth. A major physiological transition occurs during labor, when hormonal and mechanical mechanisms promote the removal of fluid from the pulmonary spaces. Maternal and fetal catecholamines, particularly those released during labor, stimulate the activation of epithelial sodium channels (ENaC) located on the apical membranes of alveolar epithelial cells. Glucocorticoids also contribute to the maturation and functional activation of these transport mechanisms.

Following ENaC activation, sodium moves from the alveolar spaces into pulmonary epithelial cells and subsequently into the pulmonary interstitium. This movement establishes an osmotic gradient that facilitates the passive movement of chloride and water. The absorbed fluid then enters the pulmonary circulation and lymphatic drainage systems, allowing the alveoli to become progressively air-filled. This transition from chloride secretion to sodium absorption represents the principal mechanism responsible for fetal lung fluid clearance after birth [11]. Mechanical forces may also contribute to pulmonary fluid removal. During vaginal delivery, compression of the fetal thorax may facilitate the displacement of some fluid from the lungs and airways. However, this mechanism has a limited contribution compared with active epithelial sodium transport and hormonal stimulation. Therefore, the absence of labor during elective cesarean delivery may increase the likelihood of delayed pulmonary fluid clearance because newborns receive less exposure to labor-associated hormonal stimulation [12][13]. Transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTN) develops when the normal transition from fetal pulmonary fluid secretion to postnatal fluid absorption is delayed, incomplete, or insufficient. Consequently, excessive fluid remains within the alveolar spaces and pulmonary interstitial tissues after delivery. This retained fluid interferes with normal pulmonary expansion, reduces lung compliance, and increases airway resistance. As a result, the newborn must generate greater respiratory effort to maintain adequate ventilation.

Pulmonary fluid accumulation also affects gas exchange by reducing the effective surface area available for oxygen diffusion and interfering with normal ventilation-perfusion relationships. These changes contribute to tachypnea, nasal flaring, intercostal and subcostal retractions, and occasional expiratory grunting. In some infants, reduced pulmonary oxygen transfer results in mild hypoxemia requiring supplemental oxygen. The severity of respiratory manifestations depends on the amount of retained fluid, the degree of pulmonary immaturity, and the effectiveness of compensatory respiratory mechanisms. Recent advances in neonatal assessment, particularly lung ultrasonography and other respiratory monitoring technologies, have improved understanding of the pathophysiological changes associated with TTN. Lung ultrasound can identify abnormalities in lung aeration and characteristic patterns associated with interstitial fluid accumulation. These findings suggest that TTN may involve a broader spectrum of pulmonary fluid and aeration abnormalities rather than a single uniform clinical presentation [14]. As pulmonary fluid is gradually absorbed through the pulmonary circulation and lymphatic system, lung compliance improves, airway resistance decreases, and effective gas exchange is restored. This explains the generally self-limiting nature of TTN, with most affected newborns recovering within 24–72 hours after birth with appropriate supportive care.

History and Physical

The clinical assessment of transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTN) begins with obtaining a detailed maternal, obstetric, and neonatal history, followed by a comprehensive physical examination. Healthcare professionals should maintain a high index of suspicion for TTN in newborns with recognized risk factors, including cesarean delivery without labor, late-preterm birth, maternal diabetes mellitus, and other conditions associated with delayed pulmonary fluid clearance. Identifying these risk factors helps nurses and clinicians recognize newborns who may require closer respiratory monitoring immediately after delivery. Most affected neonates develop respiratory symptoms within the first two hours of life. The hallmark clinical manifestation is tachypnea, defined as a respiratory rate exceeding 60 breaths per minute. Other common findings include mild-to-moderate subcostal and intercostal retractions, nasal flaring, and expiratory grunting. These manifestations reflect increased respiratory effort caused by retained fluid within the pulmonary interstitial and alveolar spaces. Symptoms may persist for several hours and generally improve gradually as the retained fluid is absorbed. Physical examination and respiratory auscultation are essential components of the assessment. Breath sounds are usually clear or slightly diminished, while crackles (rales) and wheezing are generally absent. In some infants, cyanosis may develop because of reduced oxygenation, particularly when pulmonary fluid accumulation interferes with effective gas exchange. Tachycardia may also occur in association with respiratory distress or hypoxemia. These findings generally improve following appropriate oxygen supplementation and supportive management.

Compared with other neonatal respiratory disorders, TTN usually produces mild-to-moderate respiratory distress. Affected infants generally maintain adequate systemic perfusion and do not demonstrate significant neurological abnormalities.

Furthermore, findings suggestive of neonatal sepsis, such as temperature instability, lethargy, poor feeding, and impaired peripheral perfusion, are typically absent. However, because these clinical features are not sufficient to definitively exclude infection or other serious conditions, persistent or worsening respiratory symptoms require further investigation. Nurses play an important role in early recognition through regular assessment of respiratory rate, respiratory effort, oxygen saturation, heart rate, skin color, and feeding ability. Accurate documentation of clinical findings and changes in respiratory status supports timely intervention and helps distinguish TTN from other causes of neonatal respiratory distress.

Evaluation

Early and accurate evaluation of transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTN) is essential for establishing the diagnosis, assessing the severity of respiratory distress, and differentiating the condition from other neonatal respiratory disorders. These include respiratory distress syndrome (RDS), congenital pneumonia, meconium aspiration syndrome, pneumothorax, and neonatal sepsis. Although TTN is generally self-limiting, its clinical manifestations may overlap with those of more serious conditions requiring immediate medical intervention. Therefore, healthcare professionals should initiate appropriate diagnostic investigations whenever a newborn develops unexplained tachypnea or respiratory distress rather than waiting for symptoms to persist beyond six hours. The six-hour threshold is commonly used to distinguish delayed pulmonary transition from TTN, but it should not delay clinical assessment or necessary treatment. The initial evaluation begins with a comprehensive clinical assessment and pulse oximetry to determine the newborn's oxygenation status. Preductal and postductal oxygen saturation measurements are particularly important because differences between these readings may indicate abnormal pulmonary or cardiac circulation. This assessment also helps identify infants who may have critical congenital heart disease. Continuous oxygen saturation monitoring is recommended for newborns with persistent respiratory symptoms or those requiring supplemental oxygen.

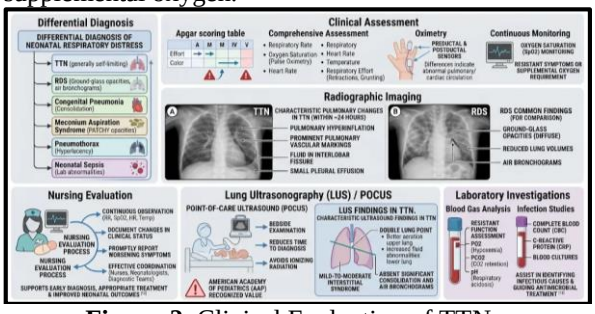


Figure-2: Clinical Evaluation of TTN.

Chest radiography is an important diagnostic investigation for identifying characteristic pulmonary changes associated with TTN. Typical radiographic findings include pulmonary hyperinflation, prominent pulmonary vascular markings, fluid accumulation within the interlobar fissures, and occasionally small pleural effusions. These findings reflect retained fetal lung fluid and help distinguish TTN from RDS, which commonly presents with diffuse ground-glass opacities, reduced lung volumes, and air bronchograms. In most cases of TTN, radiographic abnormalities gradually resolve within approximately 24 hours as pulmonary fluid is absorbed [15]. Lung ultrasonography (LUS) has increasingly become an important diagnostic tool in neonatal respiratory assessment. The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes its potential value because it is a safe imaging technique with high sensitivity and specificity for identifying TTN and differentiating it from conditions such as RDS and pneumonia [16]. Point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) allows clinicians to examine pulmonary structures directly at the bedside, potentially reducing the time required to establish a diagnosis. It also avoids exposure to ionizing radiation associated with conventional chest radiography [17]. Although POCUS is increasingly used as a first-line imaging approach in academic and tertiary neonatal units, chest radiography remains widely available and useful in facilities with limited ultrasound equipment or trained personnel.

Characteristic ultrasound findings in TTN include the double lung point, which represents a difference in lung aeration between the upper and lower pulmonary regions. The upper lung generally demonstrates better aeration, whereas the lower lung shows increased fluid-related abnormalities. Other findings may include mild-to-moderate interstitial syndrome caused by retained pulmonary fluid. Importantly, significant lung consolidation and air bronchograms are generally absent, helping distinguish TTN from neonatal pneumonia and RDS [18]. Blood gas analysis using arterial or venous samples may also be performed to evaluate respiratory function and determine the presence of hypoxemia, carbon dioxide retention, or respiratory acidosis. These findings help assess disease severity and guide decisions regarding oxygen supplementation or respiratory support. Additionally, when neonatal infection is suspected, laboratory investigations should include a complete blood count, C-reactive protein (CRP), and blood cultures. These tests assist in identifying possible infectious causes of respiratory distress and determining whether antimicrobial treatment is necessary [15]. From a nursing perspective, evaluation involves continuous observation of respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, heart rate, temperature, skin color, feeding tolerance, and respiratory effort. Nurses should document changes in clinical status and promptly report

worsening symptoms, increasing oxygen requirements, or signs of inadequate tissue perfusion. Effective coordination between nurses, neonatologists, and diagnostic teams supports early diagnosis, appropriate treatment, and improved neonatal outcomes.

Treatment / Management

Transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTN) is generally a self-limiting respiratory condition that resolves as the retained fetal lung fluid is gradually absorbed. Therefore, treatment primarily focuses on supportive care, maintaining adequate oxygenation, reducing respiratory effort, and preventing complications during the recovery period. The choice of intervention depends on the severity of respiratory distress, oxygen requirements, feeding ability, and overall clinical stability of the newborn [19].

Supportive Respiratory Management

Continuous clinical observation and respiratory monitoring represent the foundation of TTN management. Pulse oximetry is used to assess oxygen saturation and determine the need for supplemental oxygen. Infants with mild respiratory distress may require only observation, whereas those with hypoxemia may receive oxygen through an oxygen hood, nasal cannula, or other appropriate delivery systems. For newborns experiencing increased respiratory effort or persistent oxygen requirements, noninvasive respiratory support may be necessary. Nasal continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) helps maintain alveolar expansion, improve oxygenation, and reduce the work of breathing. High-flow nasal cannula therapy may also be considered in selected infants. These interventions may support pulmonary adaptation and facilitate recovery by maintaining adequate respiratory function [20]. Newborns who demonstrate clinical deterioration, fail to improve, or require a fraction of inspired oxygen (FiO_2) greater than 0.40 should be evaluated for transfer to a higher-level neonatal care facility. Such infants may require advanced respiratory monitoring, additional diagnostic investigations, and more intensive supportive interventions [21].

General Nursing and Medical Care

Routine management includes continuous cardiorespiratory monitoring to identify changes in respiratory rate, heart rate, and oxygen saturation. Maintaining a neutral thermal environment is important because hypothermia and excessive heat loss may increase metabolic oxygen consumption and respiratory demand. Healthcare professionals should also monitor fluid balance, urine output, and blood glucose levels to identify dehydration, fluid disturbances, and hypoglycemia. Intravenous access may be established when supplemental fluids or medications are required. Infection should also be considered because neonatal pneumonia and early-onset sepsis can present with symptoms similar to TTN. When clinical findings or maternal risk factors suggest possible infection, clinicians may initiate empirical antibiotic treatment, commonly using ampicillin and gentamicin, while awaiting blood culture results. Antibiotics should subsequently be reassessed according to microbiological findings and the infant's clinical condition. However, routine antibiotic administration to all infants with suspected TTN remains controversial. Recent quality-improvement initiatives emphasize antimicrobial stewardship and reducing unnecessary antibiotic exposure in clinically stable newborns without evidence of infection [22].

Feeding and Nutritional Management

Feeding management is an important component of neonatal care because significant tachypnea can interfere with the coordination of sucking, swallowing, and breathing. Infants with respiratory rates above 60 breaths per minute, substantial respiratory effort, or a requirement for respiratory support may be temporarily restricted from oral feeding because of the increased risk of aspiration. Adequate hydration and nutritional requirements can be maintained through intravenous fluids or nasogastric feeding, depending on respiratory stability and the infant's ability to tolerate enteral nutrition. Oral feeding can generally be initiated or resumed when the respiratory rate remains consistently below 60 breaths per minute, respiratory effort is minimal, and effective coordination of sucking, swallowing, and breathing has been established. Feeding decisions should be individualized according to the newborn's overall clinical condition and ability to tolerate oral intake. Nurses should monitor feeding tolerance, hydration status, urine output, and signs of aspiration.

Pharmacological Management

Medications are not routinely required for TTN because the condition usually resolves spontaneously and available evidence does not support most pharmacological interventions. Inhaled β_2-agonists, such as salbutamol, have been investigated because they may stimulate epithelial sodium transport and promote pulmonary fluid absorption. Some studies have reported modest improvements in respiratory symptoms and hospital stay; however, the available evidence remains of low certainty. Diuretics, postnatal corticosteroids, and racemic epinephrine are not recommended for routine TTN treatment because their clinical benefits have not been adequately established. Further clinical trials, including studies investigating inhaled β_2-agonists, are needed to determine the effectiveness and safety of these interventions [23][24]. Overall, effective management requires regular respiratory assessment, appropriate oxygen therapy, nutritional support, fluid monitoring, and early recognition of clinical deterioration. Nurses contribute significantly by monitoring the newborn's condition, implementing prescribed interventions, preventing complications, and educating parents about the expected recovery process.

Differential Diagnosis

The differential diagnosis of transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTN) is an essential component of neonatal assessment because several respiratory and cardiovascular disorders can produce clinical manifestations similar to those of TTN. Although TTN is generally self-limiting, other causes of neonatal respiratory distress may require urgent diagnostic investigations and specific treatment. Therefore, healthcare professionals should consider the newborn's gestational age, maternal and perinatal history, onset and severity of symptoms, physical examination findings, and diagnostic imaging when establishing the underlying cause.

Respiratory distress syndrome is primarily caused by pulmonary surfactant deficiency, resulting in increased alveolar surface tension, reduced lung compliance, and impaired gas exchange. It occurs predominantly in preterm infants, particularly those born before 34 weeks of gestation. Clinical manifestations include tachypnea, expiratory grunting, nasal flaring, chest retractions, and hypoxemia. Unlike TTN, chest radiographs typically demonstrate reduced lung volumes, diffuse reticulogranular or ground-glass opacities, and air bronchograms. Neonatal pneumonia and sepsis may present with respiratory distress, tachypnea, and increased oxygen requirements. Additional manifestations may include temperature instability, lethargy, poor feeding, impaired peripheral perfusion, and hypotension. Chest radiographs may demonstrate patchy pulmonary infiltrates or areas of consolidation. Laboratory investigations, including complete blood count, C-reactive protein, and blood cultures, help establish the diagnosis and identify systemic infection. Early recognition is important because affected infants may require immediate antimicrobial therapy and supportive management [15].

Meconium aspiration syndrome generally occurs in term or post-term infants exposed to meconium-stained amniotic fluid before or during delivery. Aspiration of meconium into the respiratory tract causes airway obstruction, chemical pneumonitis, inflammation, and impaired gas exchange. Clinical manifestations include respiratory distress, tachypnea, cyanosis, hypoxemia, and coarse breath sounds. Chest radiographs commonly demonstrate patchy infiltrates, areas of pulmonary hyperinflation, and possible atelectasis [25]. Congenital diaphragmatic hernia results from an abnormal opening in the diaphragm that allows abdominal organs to enter the thoracic cavity. This condition may interfere with normal lung development and produce significant respiratory distress immediately after birth. Clinical findings include severe respiratory difficulty, decreased breath sounds on the affected side, and a scaphoid or sunken abdomen. Chest radiography may reveal intestinal loops within the thoracic cavity and mediastinal displacement. Early recognition is essential because affected newborns require specialized respiratory and surgical management [15]. Pneumothorax occurs when air accumulates within the pleural space, causing partial or complete lung collapse. It may develop spontaneously or as a complication of respiratory support. Clinical manifestations include sudden respiratory deterioration, tachypnea, cyanosis, and reduced or absent breath sounds on the affected side. Diagnosis can be established through chest radiography, lung ultrasonography, or transillumination in selected clinical settings. A tension pneumothorax requires immediate intervention to prevent cardiovascular compromise [26].

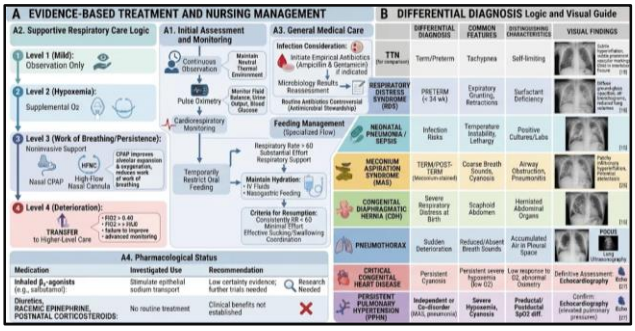


Figure-3: Comprehensive management of TTN.

Critical congenital heart disease should be considered in newborns presenting with persistent cyanosis, severe hypoxemia, shock, or poor systemic perfusion. Unlike TTN, oxygenation abnormalities may not respond adequately to supplemental oxygen. Preductal and postductal pulse oximetry measurements are important screening methods, while echocardiography provides definitive assessment of cardiac anatomy and function. Early identification is essential to initiate appropriate cardiovascular treatment [27]. Persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn is characterized by elevated pulmonary vascular resistance after birth, resulting in abnormal blood flow through the pulmonary circulation and right-to-left shunting across fetal circulatory pathways. Affected infants commonly present with severe hypoxemia, cyanosis, and respiratory distress. A difference between preductal and postductal oxygen saturation may indicate right-to-left ductal shunting. PPHN may occur independently or alongside pulmonary disorders such as meconium aspiration syndrome and pneumonia. Echocardiography is essential for confirming elevated pulmonary pressures, evaluating cardiac function, and excluding structural congenital heart disease. Accurate differentiation between these conditions and TTN is essential for appropriate neonatal management. Nurses contribute to this process through continuous assessment of respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, skin color, perfusion, temperature, and feeding tolerance. Any sudden deterioration, persistent hypoxemia, or increasing

respiratory support requirement should be reported immediately to the neonatal medical team.

Prognosis

The prognosis of transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTN) is generally excellent because the condition is self-limiting and most affected infants recover completely with appropriate supportive care. In the majority of cases, respiratory symptoms resolve within 24–72 hours after birth as retained fetal lung fluid is progressively absorbed through the pulmonary circulation and lymphatic system. As fluid clearance improves, pulmonary compliance increases, airway resistance decreases, and normal gas exchange is restored. Most newborns require only clinical observation, oxygen supplementation, or temporary noninvasive respiratory support. Invasive mechanical ventilation is rarely necessary, and most infants do not experience permanent respiratory impairment or other long-term complications [28]. The duration of recovery may vary depending on gestational age, the amount of retained pulmonary fluid, the severity of respiratory distress, and the presence of additional maternal or neonatal risk factors. Infants with mild symptoms generally recover more rapidly, whereas those with persistent tachypnea or increased oxygen requirements may require prolonged monitoring and hospitalization. Early recognition and appropriate respiratory support contribute to maintaining adequate oxygenation and preventing deterioration during the recovery period. Although TTN usually follows a benign clinical course, a more severe presentation known as malignant TTN has occasionally been described. This phenotype involves persistent respiratory distress, prolonged oxygen requirements, or the development of persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn. The underlying mechanisms may involve substantial retention of pulmonary fluid, impaired lung aeration, and increased pulmonary vascular resistance. These complications may prolong hospitalization and require advanced respiratory and cardiovascular management [28].

Some epidemiological studies have also reported an association between TTN and an increased risk of recurrent wheezing and childhood asthma. This relationship may be related to differences in early pulmonary development, airway function, or shared prenatal risk factors. However, the association does not mean that every infant diagnosed with TTN will develop chronic respiratory disease. The majority of affected newborns experience complete clinical recovery and demonstrate normal long-term pulmonary function [29][30]. From a nursing perspective, monitoring respiratory improvement, oxygen requirements, feeding tolerance, and general neonatal stability is essential before discharge. Parents should receive information about the expected recovery period and the importance of seeking medical assessment if their child develops persistent wheezing, recurrent breathing difficulties, or other respiratory symptoms during childhood. Overall, with timely diagnosis and appropriate supportive management, TTN has a favorable prognosis, and most infants achieve complete recovery without lasting health consequences.

Complications

Although transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTN) is generally considered a benign respiratory condition, some affected infants may experience short-term complications related to respiratory distress, supportive treatment, or prolonged hospitalization. The severity and frequency of these complications depend on the degree of pulmonary fluid retention, the newborn's gestational age, associated medical conditions, and the need for respiratory support. One of the most common consequences is prolonged hospitalization. Newborns with persistent tachypnea or oxygen requirements may need continuous respiratory monitoring and supportive treatment until their breathing pattern and oxygen saturation return to acceptable levels. Extended hospitalization can delay the establishment of normal breastfeeding routines and increase maternal-infant separation, particularly when infants require admission to a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). This separation may interfere with early maternal bonding, breastfeeding initiation, and parental involvement in newborn care. Feeding difficulties represent another important complication. Rapid breathing and increased respiratory effort may interfere with the coordination of sucking, swallowing, and breathing. Consequently, affected infants may have difficulty maintaining adequate oral intake and may require temporary intravenous fluids or nasogastric feeding. Inadequate feeding may increase the risk of dehydration, nutritional insufficiency, and hypoglycemia if fluid and glucose requirements are not appropriately monitored.

Some infants may also receive empirical intravenous antibiotic therapy while healthcare professionals investigate possible neonatal pneumonia or early-onset sepsis. Although antibiotics may be necessary when infection is suspected, unnecessary exposure can increase the risk of adverse drug effects, disrupt the developing intestinal microbiota, and contribute to antimicrobial resistance. Therefore, antibiotic treatment should be regularly reassessed according to clinical findings and blood culture results. In rare cases, severe respiratory distress and persistent hypoxemia may develop, requiring escalation from supplemental oxygen to noninvasive respiratory support or invasive mechanical ventilation. Mechanical ventilation can increase the risk of air-leak complications, particularly pneumothorax, which occurs when air accumulates in the pleural space and causes partial or complete lung collapse. Persistent pulmonary hypertension may also complicate severe presentations of TTN, resulting in impaired

oxygenation and increased respiratory support requirements [20][28]. Long-term respiratory complications have also been investigated. Some studies suggest that newborns diagnosed with TTN may have an increased likelihood of developing recurrent wheezing or childhood asthma. One study reported an adjusted odds ratio of approximately 1.5 for subsequent asthma among infants with a history of TTN compared with unaffected infants [29]. However, this association is relatively modest, and the underlying relationship remains incompletely understood. Shared prenatal risk factors and differences in early pulmonary development may contribute to this observation. Nurses play an important role in preventing and identifying complications through continuous monitoring of respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, feeding tolerance, hydration, and general clinical condition. Early recognition of worsening respiratory distress, cyanosis, reduced urine output, or feeding intolerance allows timely intervention. Parental education, breastfeeding support, infection prevention, and appropriate discharge planning also help minimize complications and promote healthy neonatal development.

Conclusion:

Transient tachypnea of the newborn is a common and generally self-limiting respiratory disorder caused by delayed clearance of fetal lung fluid following birth. Although most affected infants recover within 24–72 hours, early recognition and appropriate management are essential to maintain adequate oxygenation and distinguish TTN from more serious neonatal respiratory conditions. Diagnosis depends on clinical assessment supported by pulse oximetry, chest radiography, and lung ultrasonography. Treatment primarily involves supportive care, including oxygen supplementation, respiratory monitoring, fluid management, and appropriate nutritional support. Nurses have a central role in identifying respiratory deterioration, implementing prescribed interventions, preventing complications, and supporting parental involvement. Effective nursing assessment, interdisciplinary communication, and evidence-based care contribute to safe recovery and favorable neonatal outcomes. Continued research may further improve diagnostic accuracy, optimize supportive interventions, and clarify potential long-term respiratory consequences.

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