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Background: Pain is responsible for physiological changes and impairment on the neurological development of the newborn.

Purposes: To verify the knowledge of nurses about newborn’s pain evaluation and management and to compare the knowledge about pain before and after elucidation about the use of the Neonatal Infant Pain Scale (NIPS).

Method: Research-action and quantitative study using a questionnaire. The survey was performed with nurses at a public Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in Aracaju/SE.

Results: Thirty nurses answered the questionnaire. All participants came to the conclusion that newborn feels pain; both behavioral and physiological parameters were used to evaluate it. The first and second evaluations using the NIPS, however without elucidation of parameters revealed 18 (30%) newborns diagnosed with pain and 42 (70%) diagnosed with no pain. The third and fourth evaluations, after elucidation about NIPS revealed an increased number of infants diagnosed with pain (n=39, 65%) and a decreased number of newborns diagnosed with no pain (n=21, 35%).

Conclusion: The nurses demonstrated little knowledge about the use of pain scale. The explanation made easy and influenced positively for the evaluation and diagnosis of pain.

Key words: pain, newborn, scale.