

MRI at 12 ± 2 months' corrected age without sedation

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Sir,

We read with interest the article by Edwards and Arthurs [1] about the methodological challenges of acquiring high-quality MRI in young children. Although the use of anaesthesia and sedation is often a possibility, parents are often hesitant. Consequently, we have developed a protocol for performing MRI in infants at 12 ± 2 months corrected age [12.4 months corrected age (range 10 months-14 months)] born prematurely or at term, both with and without intrauterine growth restriction [2, 3]. The protocol involves parents, clinicians and nurses. The main steps are: (1) to decrease anxiety in parents through explaining and addressing questions about the procedure, (2) to habituate parents and child to the noise of the scanner (parents are provided with a CD of the scanner sounds to play at home during their child's sleep), and (3) to define a sleep plan according to the needs, sensitivities and regular bedtime routine of the individual child. On the day of the scan, morning naps are restricted and the feeding schedule is adjusted according to the time of the MRI examination. After reception in the department, a quiet room is provided, close to the scanner, with an infant bed, adjustable lighting, soft music, toys and books. The child is fed just before the scan and then carried sleeping into the scanner by the parents. The order of the

pulse sequences is ordered according to noise level to coincide with the child's depth of sleep.

We have attempted 237 examinations using this procedure with successful outcome in 190 (80%) and conclude that high-quality MRI can be performed without sedation at 12 ± 2 months corrected age in infants.

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