Background

Liverpool Intensive Care Unit (ICU) provides the highest level of intensive care in south western Sydney. Liverpool Hospital is a teaching hospital of the University of New South Wales, and Liverpool ICU is a member of the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society Clinical Trial Group (ANZICS-CTG), which is committed to intensive care research.

Why do we do research in ICU?

- Helps us to find new ways to improve care of our ICU patients
- Gives us a better understanding of illnesses and how to treat them
- Helps to ensure our health care is up-to-date and the best that science can provide
- May improve how ICU doctors make decisions in the future

Is research in ICU ethical?

- All research projects in Australia are reviewed and authorised by a Human Research Ethics Committee
- We cannot participate in a research project without approval from an Ethics Committee
- An Ethics Committee would not give approval for a research project if they thought it may be of high risk to patients
- Patient identities remain confidential and will only be disclosed with patient or ‘person responsible’ permission

Participating in ICU research

- All ICU patients are screened by the ICU Research Coordinator & trained clinicians to determine if they are eligible for participation in a research project
- Participation in any research project is voluntary and our first concern is always for the patient's welfare.
- Participation may help future ICU patients
- Whilst your relative/friend is in the ICU, you or other family members/friends may be approached to discuss their involvement in a research project

Giving consent to participate in research

- NSW law allows the ‘Person Responsible’ (relative/friend) of a patient to consent to the patient taking part in medical research where the patient is unable to provide consent for themselves
- In some studies, a patient may need to receive treatment quickly, so they are enrolled into the study by their treating doctor. The Ethics Committee approves this process in the knowledge that the treatment being studied if considered part of standard treatment in ICU patients
- If your relative/friend is enrolled in a study by their treating doctor, you or another family member/friend will be provided with an information sheet/consent form relating to the particular study
- As the ‘person responsible’, once you have read the information sheet and have asked/discussed any questions you may have, if you are happy for your relative/friend to continue in the study, you will be asked to complete the consent form and hand it to ICU staff

Withdrawing from a research project

- Participation in any research project is voluntary
- If you decide that your relative/friend would not want to participate, it will not affect the treatment they receive now or in the future
- If a patient or their ‘person responsible’ want to withdraw from a study once it has started, they can do so at any time

Past ICU Research Activities

Over the past ten years, Liverpool ICU has participated in many high quality research projects. Some of which have been large world-wide studies, which have changed the way we care for our ICU patients. Some previous/current research projects include:

- Augmenting enteral feed calories given to critically ill patients (TARGET Study)
- Selective decontamination of digestive tract as infection control approach for critically ill patients (SuDDICU)
- Comparing Plasma-Lyte 148® vs. 0/9% sodium chloride in fluid resuscitation and intravenous fluid therapy for critically ill patients
- Administering low dose steroids in ICU patients with septic shock (ADRENAL Study)
- Control of blood sugar levels in ICU patients (NICE-SUGAR Study)
- Comparing 2 different doses of dialysis on ICU patients with kidney failure (RENAL Study)

If you would like to know more about research projects that are being conducted in ICU, please feel free to ask any member of the ICU team.