

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

FOR NEONATAL NURSES

IN KENYA



MAY 2022

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NURSING COUNCIL OF KENYA- VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES



Our Vision

A world-class regulatory body in nursing and midwifery education, and practice.



Our Mission

Develop standards, enforce regulations in nursing and midwifery education, and practice.



Our Values

Our core values express that everything we do comes from deeply-held commitments and shared understanding of our values, what we stand for, how we treat each other and those we serve; that inform every policy and steer every action summarized as:-

I – Integrity: We are committed to acting in an honest, accountable and transparent manner in all our undertakings.

N – Nurture: We value and nurture the strength of character it takes to work together as a team, to be an individual, to respect differences of opinions, and have the ability to empathize with others.

S – Social responsibility: Caring for the patient, family, community and the environment.

P – Professionalism: We are dedicated to the highest levels of achievement obtainable through competencies and critical skills.

I – Innovation: We thrive on creativity and ingenuity. We seek the innovations that are evidence-based and data-driven to bring a positive change to the Council.

R – Responsiveness: We act with a sense of urgency, make qualified decisions in time and provide fiscally responsible solutions.

E – Excellence: We pledge the highest levels of effectiveness and efficiency.

FOREWORD

The Nursing Council of Kenya is a regulatory body established by an Act of Parliament to make provision for nursing education and practice. The mission of the Council is to ensure provision of quality nursing training and maintenance of professional nursing practice through research and appropriate regulation. To fulfill its vision and mission, the Council develops and reviews regulatory tools like this scope of practice to provide a practice framework that conforms to current needs, demands and context of the health care system.

This scope of practice defines the limits of care and legal boundaries of neonatal nursing practice. It clarifies what the neonatal nurse can be held accountable for in the course of practice.

The development of this first edition document has been influenced by global, regional and national trends in nursing and health care through a consultative process by various stakeholders. It refers to Nurses Act CAP 257, NCK Strategic plan 2017-2022 and Scope of practice for Nurses & Midwives in Kenya- Entry level 4th edition. It is envisaged that this scope of practice will be of great benefit in all practice settings.

Prof Eunice Ndirangu- Mugo

Chairperson- NCK Board

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Nursing Council of Kenya wishes to thank all individuals and institutions who have contributed to the development of this document. Special thanks to the Discipline Standards and Ethics (DSE) committee members for providing leadership during the entire process.

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5. Kabarak University
6. Kenya Medical Training College
7. Kenya Progressive Nurses Association
8. Kenyatta National Hospital
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11. Midwives Association of Kenya
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APTT	Activated Partial Thromboplastin Time
CAP	Chapter
CBC	Complete Blood Count
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPAP	Continuous Positive Airway Pressure
CRP	C-Reactive Protein
CSF	Cerebrospinal Fluid
Ct Scan	Computerized Tomography Scan
DSE	Discipline Standards And Ethics
FBS	Fasting Blood Sugar
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IV	Intravenous
KRNeoN	Higher Diploma In Neonatal Nursing
KUB	Kidney, Ureter, and Bladder
LFTs	Liver Function Tests
MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
NCK	Nursing Council of Kenya
NGT	Nasogastric Tube Feeding
OGT	Oral Gastric Tube
PET	Positron Emission Tomography
PTI	Prothrombin Time Index
RBS	Random Blood Sugar
U/E/C	Urea/Electrolyte/Creatinine

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Scope of Practice

The purpose of this document is to define the scope of practice for neonatal nursing in Kenya. It outlines those activities that are within the expertise of neonatal nurses. It is intended for use by nurses, other healthcare professionals, consumers of nursing services and the general public. It serves as a reference for service delivery, consumer education, nursing regulatory activities and inter-professional relations.

1.2 Levels of Neonatal Nursing Preparation in Kenya

1.2.1 Higher Diploma in Neonatal Nursing (KRNeonN)

At this level, the nurse has a post-basic diploma in neonatal nursing. In addition to the scope of a general registered nurse, the nurse with a post-basic diploma also has competencies which are in line with their field of specialization.

1.2.2 Post-Graduate Diploma in Neonatal Nursing

The nurse has a post-graduate diploma in neonatal nursing. In addition to the scope of a general registered nurse, this nurse also has competencies which are in line with their field of specialization.

1.2.3 Masters of Science in Neonatal Nursing

The nurse is prepared at a master's level in neonatal nursing. In addition to being prepared to take up the roles of a clinical practitioner, a nurse with a Masters degree in neonatal nursing is also prepared to be a nurse educator, manager/leader, counselor and researcher.

SECTION 2: SPECIFIC SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR THE NEONATAL NURSE

2.1 Higher Diploma in Neonatal Nursing

Applicability

This scope shall be applicable to persons who have completed a higher diploma in neonatal nursing. The nurse with a higher diploma in neonatal nursing shall: -

1. Assess, diagnose, manage and evaluate health needs of neonates at all levels of care and refer appropriately.
2. Initiate collaborative care for neonates with special needs, including those with chronic illnesses and abnormalities or are neglected or abused.
3. Institute emergency interventions including cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and endotracheal intubation to at risk neonates.
4. Analyze and interpret results for diagnostic tests and procedures in the management of neonatal clients.
5. Assess need for, initiate and manage neonates on phototherapy.
6. Initiate oral gastric/nasogastric tube insertion, feeding and monitoring.
7. Initiate and support infant feeding including exclusive breastfeeding, formula feeding and manage a human milk bank.
8. Initiate and support kangaroo mother care, and encourage family involvement.
9. Prepare, use and care for special equipment in neonatal units.
10. Prescribe and administer fluids and medications via appropriate routes with the exception of the intrathecal and intracardiac routes.
11. In collaboration with the multidisciplinary team, administer therapeutic diets including total parenteral nutrition.
12. Prescribe, initiate, monitor and manage prophylactic or rescue continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) ventilation.
13. Manage neonates on mechanical ventilation.
14. Implement nursing care models/ pathways for neonates in health care settings as well as within families and communities.

15. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health care team in making ethical decisions regarding care outcomes.
16. Participate in development and implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to quality neonatal care services.
17. Provide clinical teaching and mentorship to multidisciplinary health team in the neonatal unit.
18. Provide psychosocial care to neonatal, families and communities.
19. Monitor and follow up on care provided to neonates.
20. Manage neonatal services at ward/unit level in a hospital
21. Participate in and utilize research findings to improve neonatal care.

2.2 Post-Graduate Diploma in Neonatal Nursing

Applicability

This scope shall be applicable to persons who have completed a post-graduate diploma in neonatal nursing. The nurse with a post graduate diploma in nursing shall: -

1. Assess, diagnose, manage and evaluate health needs of neonates and refer to appropriate levels of care.
2. Initiate collaborative care for neonates with special needs, including those with chronic illnesses and abnormalities or are neglected or abused.
3. Institute emergency interventions including cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and endotracheal intubation to at risk neonates.
4. Analyze and interpret results for diagnostic tests and procedures in the management of neonatal clients.
5. Perform exchange blood transfusion as per manual of clinical procedures and other certified manuals.
6. Assess need for, initiate and manage neonates on phototherapy.
7. Initiate oral gastric/nasogastric tube insertion, feeding and monitoring.
8. Initiate and support infant feeding including exclusive breastfeeding, formula feeding and manage a human milk bank.
9. Initiate and support kangaroo mother care, and encourage family involvement.
10. Prepare, use and care for special equipment in neonatal units.

11. Prescribe, administer and manage fluids and medications via appropriate routes with the exception of the intrathecal and intracardiac routes.
12. In collaboration with the multidisciplinary team, administer therapeutic diets including total parenteral nutrition.
13. Prescribe, initiate, monitor and manage prophylactic or rescue continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) ventilation.
14. Initiate and manage neonates on mechanical ventilation.
15. Implement and evaluate nursing care models/ pathways for neonates in health care settings as well as within families and communities.
16. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health care team in making ethical decisions regarding care outcomes.
17. Develop and implement policies and guidelines that promote access to quality neonatal care services.
18. Provide psychosocial care to neonates, families and communities.
19. Monitor and follow up on care provided to neonates.
20. Manage neonatal services in facilities as well as training institutions.
21. Implement curriculum related to neonatal nursing for diploma and higher diploma programs.
22. Conduct and utilize research findings to improve neonatal care services.

2.3 Master of Science degree in Neonatal Nursing

Applicability

This scope shall be applicable to persons who have completed a masters degree neonatal nursing. The nurse with a masters degree neonatal nursing shall: -

1. Assess, diagnose, manage and evaluate health needs of neonates and refer to appropriate levels of care.
2. Initiate collaborative care for neonates with special needs, including those with chronic illnesses and abnormalities or are neglected or abused.
3. Institute emergency interventions including cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and endotracheal intubation to at risk neonates.

4. Prescribe, analyze and interpret diagnostic tests and procedures necessary in the management of neonatal clients.
5. Prescribe, initiate and monitor exchange blood transfusion as per manual of clinical procedures and other certified manuals.
6. Assess need for, initiate and manage neonates on phototherapy.
7. Prescribe and initiate oral gastric/nasogastric tube insertion, feeding and monitoring.
8. Prescribe, initiate and support infant feeding including exclusive breastfeeding, formula feeding and manage a human milk bank.
9. Prescribe, initiate and support kangaroo mother care and encourage family involvement.
10. Prepare, use and care for special equipment in neonatal units.
11. Prescribe, and administer medications and fluids via appropriate routes except intrathecal and intracardiac routes.
12. In collaboration with the multidisciplinary team, prescribe and administer therapeutic diets to include total parenteral nutrition.
13. Prescribe, initiate, monitor and adjust prophylactic or rescue continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) ventilation.
14. Prescribe, initiate and monitor neonates on invasive mechanical ventilation.
15. Initiate, direct, implement and evaluate nursing care models/ pathways for neonates in health care settings as well as within families and communities.
16. Collaborate with multidisciplinary health care team in making ethical decisions regarding care outcomes.
17. Evaluate quality of care in the neonatal care units to inform quality improvement.
18. Supervise clinical management of neonatal clients at all levels of care.
19. Provide technical assistance through consultancy in neonatal nursing.
20. Initiate development and implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to quality neonatal care services.
21. Provide classroom and clinical teaching as well as mentorship to students and multidisciplinary health team.
22. Provide psychosocial care to neonates, families and communities.
23. Monitor and follow up on care provided to neonates.
24. Manage neonatal services at all levels of health care provision.

25. Design, implement and evaluate curriculum related to neonatal nursing for undergraduate and post graduate programs.
26. Initiate, conduct, utilize and disseminate research findings to improve care in neonatal settings.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Comparative Table

Higher Diploma in Neonatal Nursing	Post Graduate Diploma in Neonatal Nursing	Masters of Science Degree in Neonatal Nursing
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess, diagnose, manage and evaluate health needs of neonates at all levels of care and refer appropriately. 2. Initiate collaborative care for neonates with special needs, including those with chronic illnesses and disabilities or are neglected or abused. 3. Institute emergency interventions including cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and endotracheal intubation to at risk neonates. 4. Prescribe, analyze and interpret diagnostic tests and procedures necessary in the management of neonatal clients. 5. Assess need for, initiate and manage neonates on phototherapy. 6. Initiate orogastric/nasogastric tube insertion, feeding and monitoring. 7. Initiate and support infant feeding including exclusive breastfeeding, formula feeding and manage a human milk bank. 	<p>In addition to the scope of practice of a nurse with a higher diploma in neonatal nursing, the nurse with a post graduate diploma in neonatal nursing shall: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prescribe, initiate and support kangaroo mother care, and encourage family involvement. 2. Prescribe, initiate and monitor neonates on invasive mechanical ventilation. 3. Prescribe, initiate and support infant feeding including exclusive breastfeeding, formula feeding and manage a human milk bank. 4. Prescribe and initiate orogastric/nasogastric tube insertion, feeding and monitoring. 5. Prescribe and conduct umbilical catheterization in neonates. 6. Prescribe, initiate and monitor exchange blood transfusion as per manual 	<p>In addition to the scope of practice of a nurse with a post graduate diploma in neonatal nursing, the nurse with a masters of science degree in neonatal nursing shall:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiate, direct, implement and evaluate nursing care models/ pathways for neonates, families and communities. 2. Supervise clinical management of neonatal clients at all levels of care. 3. Provide technical assistance through consultancy in neonatal nursing. 4. Initiate development and implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to quality neonatal care services. 5. Design, implement and evaluate curriculum related to neonatal

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Initiate and support kangaroo mother care, and encourage family involvement. 9. Prepare, use and care for special equipment in neonatal units. 10. Prescribe and administer fluids and medications via appropriate routes with the exception of the intrathecal and intracardiac routes. 11. In collaboration with the multidisciplinary team, administer therapeutic diets including total parenteral nutrition. 12. Prescribe, initiate, monitor and manage prophylactic or rescue continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) ventilation. 13. Manage neonates on mechanical ventilation. 14. Perform intravenous (IV) and arterial cannulations in neonates. 15. Support in umbilical catheterization. 16. Support in exchange blood transfusion as per manual of clinical procedures and other certified manuals. 17. Implement nursing care models/ pathways for neonates in health care settings as well as within families and communities. 18. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> of clinical procedures and other certified manuals. 7. Develop and implement policies and guidelines that promote access to quality neonatal care services. 8. Manage neonatal services in facilities as well as training institutions. 9. Implement curriculum related to neonatal nursing for diploma and higher diploma programs. 10. Conduct and utilize research findings to improve neonatal care services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> nursing for undergraduate and post graduate programs. 6. Initiate, conduct, utilize and disseminate research findings to improve care in neonatal settings
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<p>team in making ethical decisions regarding care outcomes.</p> <p>19. Participate in development and implementation of policies and guidelines that promote access to quality neonatal care services.</p> <p>20. Provide psychosocial care to neonates, families and communities.</p> <p>21. Monitor and follow up on care provided to neonates.</p> <p>22. Manage neonatal services at ward/units level in a hospital.</p> <p>23. Participate in and utilize. research findings to improve neonatal care.</p>		
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Appendix II: Schedule of Specialized Procedures

SPECIALISED PROCEDURES	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTERS
Asses need for, initiate and manage phototherapy			
Insertion of NGT/ OGT			
CPAP ventilation			
Calculating the required kilocalories as per age and initiate enteral feeding	C		
Initiate parenteral feeding where enteral feeding is not possible	C		
Pulmonary hygiene (endotracheal suction)			
Removal of a chest tube			
Airway management for a non-intubated patient			
Bone marrow aspirate			
Lumber puncture			A
Pericardiocentesis, thoracentesis and paracentesis			
Plasmapheresis			
Perform intravenous (IV) and arterial cannulations in neonates			
Support in umbilical catheterization			
Exchange Blood transfusion			
Thermoregulation and cooling therapy			

KEY

	Perform unassisted
	Perform with assistance
	Assist
A	Additional training
C	Consultation

Appendix III: Schedule of Laboratory & Radiological Investigations

INVESTIGATIONS	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTERS
Complete blood count (CBC)			
Urea/Electrolyte/Creatinine (U/E/C)			
Serum Urea Clearance			
Serum Creatinine Clearance			
Urinalysis (dipstick)			
Pregnancy test			
Blood sugar (RBS/FBS)			
Coagulation profile (APTT, PTI)			
Liver function tests (LFTs)			
Bilirubin Levels	C		
Lipid profile	C		
Cultures (blood, urine, tracheal aspirate, catheter tip, pus swab)			
Procalcitonin			
C-Reactive protein (CRP)			
CSF studies			
HIV			
Hepatitis B&C			
Gene expert			
Thyroid function test			
Stool for ova & cyst			
Ferritin level			
Renal biopsy			
RADIOLOGICAL TESTS			
X-ray	C	C	C
Renal doppler/ultrasound		A	A
Ct Scan/MRI/PET	C	C	C

INVESTIGATIONS	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTERS
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KEY

	Order, perform, interpret and utilize
	Order interpret and utilize
	Interpret and utilize
	Utilize
A	Additional training
C	Consultation

Appendix IV: Drug List Scheduling Considerations

The nurse shall be guided by the following: -

1. Work to the extent of training and certification, i.e. higher diploma, postgraduate or masters.
2. Power to prescribe medications with different levels of physician oversight categorized as follows: -
 - Restricted
 - Reduced restrictions
 - Full practice autonomy
3. Individual qualification, experience and competence.

The neonatal care nurse shall prescribe/administer prescribed drugs & vaccines and other medical products and technologies in line with the competencies, job description and institutional guidelines.

The neonatal care nurse shall prescribe and/or administer specific drugs in: -

- i. Consultation with the prescribing officer. The drugs shall be relevant to the ailment in question as per the pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetic principles.
- ii. Emergency situations where her/his decision shall result in saving the life of the patient.
- iii. Situations where a neonatal nurse is licensed as a private practitioner, working in a public / family/ or community setting and the patient's condition warrants so.
- iv. Circumstances where patient/client is bleeding and requires urgent intervention to save life. The neonatal nurse shall prescribe and administer intravenous fluids, blood and blood products to stabilize the patient.
- v. A case where a prescription has been given by the relevant prescribing officer.
- vi. Scenarios where a neonatal nurse is working in level 3 facilities and below.

Medications that can be prescribed and administered by a neonatal nurse include medications for: -

- For seizure/ convulsions

- Pain management
- Relief of fever
- Antibiotics
- Management of shock syndromes
- Management of electrolyte derangements
- Fluid balance
- Blood and blood products transfusion

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