The newborn regulatory behaviour (crying, feeding and sleeping) following early cardiac surgery

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Background
Hospital admission and surgery for congenital heart defects (CHD) have a significant impact on the ecology of the developing infant parent relationship. Medical interventions and the intensive-care setting may overwhelm the infant's capacity to regulate environmental input. Parents may be physically absent or their emotional response to the crisis may compromise their buffering support. Our team (in a tertiary paediatric hospital) found in an earlier study 1) high rates of infant crying, feeding and sleeping problems in infants 6 weeks after discharge following surgery; 2) strained parent infant attachment relationships for 25% of mothers and 17% of fathers; and 3) high levels of parent depression and trauma symptoms.

Objectives
The current study examined the daily patterns of the newborn regulatory behaviour (crying, feeding and sleeping) in a cohort of infants who had cardiac surgery in the first 6 months of life. The study examined parents' preferred method for soothing an infant and their beliefs and preferences for caregiving. The relationships between parent's beliefs and baby's crying and sleeping behaviour will be explored.

Methods
Parents of infants under 6 months of age who had surgery for CHD in 2015 were recruited during the admission. 6 weeks after infant discharge from hospital following cardiac surgery, 27 mothers completed questionnaires (including the Schedule Demand Inventory and the Mother Responsiveness Scale) and behavioural diaries. The behavioural diaries involved documenting the baby's behaviour on a 5cm slide ruler over a continuous 24-hour period when the baby was 5 months old.

Findings
Data analysis is underway and will be completed for the conference

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