

# Exploring the Impact of Prefeeding Oral Motor Therapy on Feeding Advancement in a Thai Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: A Randomized Controlled Examination

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## Abstract

Neonatal Ak - N L rNe© k k l  
the impact of prefeeding oral motor therapy on feeding advancement among preterm infants in a Thai NICU setting. A randomized controlled trial design was employed, with preterm infants (gestational age < 37 weeks) randomized to receive either prefeeding oral motor therapy in addition to standard care or standard care alone. The therapy involved structured exercises targeting oral motor skills and coordination, administered by trained therapists. Feeding progression metrics, including suck-swallow-breathe coordination, feeding duration, and weight gain, were assessed at regular intervals. Preliminary results suggest a significant improvement in feeding advancement among infants receiving prefeeding oral motor therapy compared to those receiving standard care alone. Specifically, infants in the intervention group demonstrated enhanced suck-swallow-breathe coordination, reduced feeding duration, and improved weight gain trajectories. These findings highlight the potential of prefeeding oral motor therapy as an effective intervention for promoting feeding advancement in preterm infants. **Reviewed:** 18-May-2024 (PQ); **QC No.** jspt-24-137722 (PQ); **No-jspt-24-137722; Revised:** 25-May-2024, Manuscript No. jspt-24-137722(R); **Published:** 31-May-2024, DOI: 10.4172/2472-5005.1000241

**Citation:** Brovero G (2024) Exploring the Impact of Prefeeding Oral Motor Therapy on Feeding Advancement in a Thai Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: A Randomized Controlled Examination. J Speech Pathol Ther 9: 241.

**Keywords:** Neonatal feeding; Oral motor therapy; Premature infants; Neonatal intensive care unit; Feeding advancement; Randomized controlled trial; Neonatal care

Against this backdrop, investigating the impact of prefeeding oral motor therapy on feeding advancement in a Thai NICU setting is of paramount importance. This randomized controlled examination seeks to address this gap in the literature by rigorously evaluating the efficacy of prefeeding oral motor therapy in enhancing feeding progression among preterm infants admitted to a Thai NICU [7-9]. By employing a randomized controlled trial design, we aim to provide robust empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of this intervention within the Thai healthcare context. Through comprehensive assessment and analysis, we endeavor to elucidate the potential benefits of prefeeding oral motor therapy in improving feeding outcomes and optimizing neonatal care practices in Thailand [10].

## Introduction

Neonatal feeding difficulties pose significant challenges in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) worldwide, particularly in regions like Thailand where access to specialized care and resources may vary [1]. Preterm infants, in particular, often encounter feeding issues due to immature oral motor skills, necessitating interventions to support their feeding development. In this study, we delve into the efficacy of prefeeding oral motor therapy in enhancing feeding progression among preterm infants in a Thai NICU setting. Neonatal feeding difficulties represent a significant concern in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) worldwide, particularly among preterm infants. The ability to feed effectively is a critical milestone in neonatal development, influencing overall growth, nutrition, and long-term outcomes [2,3]. However, preterm infants often encounter challenges such as weak sucking reflexes, poor coordination, and oral motor dysfunction, which can impede successful feeding and contribute to complications such as aspiration, poor weight gain, and prolonged hospital stays. In recent years, prefeeding oral motor therapy has emerged as a promising intervention aimed at addressing these challenges and promoting feeding advancement in preterm infants [4,5]. This therapeutic approach involves structured exercises and techniques designed to improve oral motor skills, coordination, and sucking abilities, with the ultimate goal of facilitating successful feeding and enhancing nutritional intake. While prefeeding oral motor therapy has shown promise in various clinical settings, including NICUs, its efficacy within specific contexts such as Thai NICUs remains relatively unexplored. Thailand, like many other countries, faces unique challenges in neonatal care, including limited resources, diverse patient populations, and varying healthcare practices [6]. Despite advancements in neonatal medicine, neonatal feeding difficulties continue to present clinical challenges, highlighting the need for evidence-based interventions tailored to local contexts.

## Objective

The primary objective of this randomized controlled examination is to evaluate the impact of prefeeding oral motor therapy on feeding advancement among preterm infants admitted to a Thai NICU. By rigorously assessing the efficacy of this intervention, we aim to provide valuable insights into its potential as a standard practice in neonatal care settings.

## **Methodology**

This study adopts a randomized controlled trial design, recruiting preterm infants (gestational age < 37 weeks) admitted to a Thai NICU. Participants are randomly assigned to either the intervention group,