Neonatal screening: new recommendations

Health Council of the Netherlands

Record Status
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Authors' conclusions
Shortly after birth, almost every baby in our country undergoes a heel prick test. At the moment, the blood thus acquired is tested for 17 diseases, for which early detection is important in order to prevent or limit health damage. The neonatal screening field is dynamic. Treatment options for some diseases have improved significantly in recent years, and there are also diseases that can be detected better than before. In addition, several social and ethical questions have arisen about the neonatal screening programme. Two issues are particularly salient: the exact goal of neonatal screening, and dealing with incidental findings, such as carrier status for diseases. Considering these scientific and social developments, the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport decided to request advice from the Health Council of the Netherlands. Specifically, she also asked which diseases should be added to the neonatal screening programme. A specially appointed Committee drafted the requested advisory report.

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