COVID-19-induced collateral damage

NeoVitaA Study Group

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The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented, globe-spanning threat to humanity that entails a multilayered set of problems. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has been confronted with a myriad of medical issues, but collateral damage, most importantly economic hardship, has emerged as well [1].

The NeoVitaA is a prospective, multicenter, European, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, investigator-initiated, phase III trial to assess the effect of early high-dose oral vitamin A supplementation on the development of bronchopulmonary dys-

plasia/death in extremely low birth weight infants (914 neonates to be enrolled) [2].

Although neonates are only very rarely affected by SARS-COV-2 infection, a significant flattening in patient enrolment was seen with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (orange line, Fig. 1), with the most pronounced decline starting March 2020 (red line, Fig. 1). Potential reasons for this pattern include a lack of hospital resources and staff shortage as well as parental anxiety secondary to COVID-19. With the reversal of

Fig. 1 Recruitment pattern before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

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important lockdown measures, an uptick in patient enrollment was noted (green line, Fig. 1).

Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the realization of clinical trials, it is important to communicate these problems to funding agencies to make necessary adjustments, most importantly with regard to study extension.

Conflict of interest S. Meyer is chief investigator of the NeoVitaA study which is funded by the German Research Council (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*).

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