Editorial

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Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures: From Evidence to Clinical Practice

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Launching the first editorial of the Journal of Neonatal and Pediatric Clinical Practice is both an honor and a responsibility. It represents the beginning of a shared scientific journey, but above all, an opportunity to reaffirm a fundamental principle: the health of tomorrow's adults begins even before pregnancy and continues to be shaped during the earliest years of life.

This vision strongly aligns with the World Health Organization's current global focus, "Healthy beginnings, hopeful futures," which highlights maternal and newborn health as a priority for improving lifelong outcomes. The WHO campaign calls for reducing preventable maternal and newborn deaths, supporting parents and healthcare professionals, and strengthening long-term health outcomes for women, newborns, and families worldwide. This is not simply a public health slogan. It is a scientific and ethical imperative.

Health trajectories are built early. Prevention, education, access to care, and the promotion of healthy behaviors during pregnancy, infancy, childhood, and adolescence profoundly shape future well-being. For this reason, improving awareness of and access to appropriate health choices for children is not only a pediatric priority, but a strategic investment in the health of future generations.

Today, more than ever, scientific research has provided healthcare professionals with a solid body of evidence. Multidisciplinary and interprofessional teams have access to increasingly robust knowledge, capable of guiding safer and more effective care pathways. Yet, as professionals, we must also recognize a critical truth: often, the problem is no longer the absence of evidence. The real challenge lies in implementation.

There are several clear examples in child health and development. Strong evidence shows that prevention is a key element in supporting harmonious psychological, physical, and cognitive development in children. Prevention must begin with the foundations of child development, addressing primary needs and essential functions such as nutrition, sleep, affective care, and social interaction. Breastfeeding is one of the clearest examples: its benefits are widely recognized, yet in many contexts breastfeeding still does not reach acceptable levels of support and continuity, and current practices often remain below WHO infant feeding recommendations (Zong et al., 2021; Klicker et al., 2026; Tang et al., 2026). In some settings, formula feeding is too readily presented as an equivalent alternative, rather than as an option to be used when breastfeeding is not possible or not chosen after informed counselling.

Another example concerns complementary feeding. Despite available recommendations, the introduction of solid foods is often accompanied by feeding practices that do not always reflect

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the child's actual nutritional needs. Excessive caloric intake, unbalanced food choices, and early exposure to highly palatable foods may contribute to the development of unhealthy eating patterns (Marinho et al., 2026). Over time, these patterns can increase the risk of overweight and obesity, with potential consequences extending throughout childhood and adolescence.

The same applies to early exposure to digital devices. Scientific evidence increasingly highlights the potential impact of excessive or premature screen exposure on language development, sleep quality, cognitive abilities, attention, and emotional well-being. Nevertheless, the data remain alarming: a significant proportion of children have access to smartphones and digital devices before the recommended age, often without adequate guidance, limits, or parental awareness (Sutton and Thompson, 2026).

Mental health in childhood and adolescence is another area where the gap between evidence and practice is particularly concerning. Behaviours such as early and uncontrolled access to smartphones and digital platforms have been associated with negative effects on sleep, cognitive functioning, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and social development (Weingarten et al., 2026). Yet, despite recommendations and warnings, these behaviours are becoming increasingly normalized in everyday family life.

However, health promotion cannot exist without trust. Families need reliable relationships with healthcare professionals who accompany them across different care settings, whether in hospitals, outpatient clinics, primary care services, schools, or community contexts. Prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and long-term support all require strong therapeutic alliances based on competence, continuity, and communication.

These examples show that having evidence is not enough. Evidence must be translated into practice, into education, into family support, and into coherent public health strategies. The responsibility of healthcare professionals is therefore not only to know the evidence, but also to promote its implementation, helping families to make informed, sustainable, and developmentally appropriate choices for their children.

We know what should be done, but translating evidence into daily clinical practice remains one of the greatest barriers in healthcare. Changing behaviours, redesigning systems, supporting professionals, and ensuring that best practices are consistently applied are complex processes that require leadership, culture, and accountability. Implementation science is not an accessory to research, it is the bridge between knowledge and real impact.

It is precisely within this space that the Journal of Neonatal and Pediatric Clinical Practice finds its purpose.

It aims to give voice not only to scientific production, but especially to translational research, implementation studies, and clinical innovation capable of improving everyday care. We want to promote evidence that can be applied, measured, and transformed into better outcomes for neonates, children, adolescents, and, inevitably, their families.

Clinical practice must remain the final destination of research.

Our ambition is to create an international scientific space where neonatal and pediatric professionals can share not only discoveries, but solutions; not only evidence, but implementation; not only theory, but meaningful change.

Because every healthy beginning deserves a hopeful future.

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