CHILDREN DEPENDENT ON MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY: KNOWLEDGE & CHALLENGES FOR ADVANCED HOMECARE NURSES
Cora O Leany*, Olivia Sinclair. Resilience Care, Cork, Ireland
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Background In 1981, a child in the US was discharged home dependent on medical technology. Since then, it is widely acknowledged this cohort of children should live at home. However, most countries are still reactive in their approach to care.

Aim The aim of this research proposal is to gain a better understanding of nurses’ knowledge and the challenges they encounter caring for children who are dependent on medical technology living at home.

Method As this is an evolving area of paediatric nursing, a survey was sent to advanced home care nurses. This had 10 multiple choice questions about tracheostomy tube and enteral feeding. There was an addition 10 questions that were free text to gain an insight into the challenges nurses’ face working in the home care setting. These challenges were further discussed in focus groups.

Findings/Results There was 67% return rate on the questionnaires and following 3 focus groups the common themes identified were the ‘nurse parent relationship’, ‘family dependency’ on services and nurses in the home and ‘competency and care planning’.

Conclusion Advanced home care nurses’ find working in the home care setting both rewarding and challenging in equal measures. Education and training is vital to ensure nurses are competent to care for a child who is dependent on medical technology which will help build a trusting relationship with the family.