

Therapeutic Effects of Kangaroo Mother Care on Preterm Babies

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Abstract: Preterm babies are more prone to develop disorders and so require immediate intensive care. In the conventional neonatal intensive care, the baby is kept in the incubator, separated from the mother. Some actions have been taken in order to make this mother-child separation less traumatic. One of these actions is the Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) characterized by skin-to-skin contact between mother and her newborn. The spreading acceptance of Kangaroo Mother Care is an indication of its function as a human incubator which is easily available. It is not only satisfying to both the baby and the parents and costs nothing but also results in early discharge and infant survival. In view of the benefits KMC brings to the infants and parents, this practice has to be encouraged.

Keywords: Preterm babies, Kangaroo Mother Care.

I. Introduction

Every child has the right to grow up in a healthy environment. The future development of children depends on their enjoying good health today. A child is precious not only to his parents, but also to community, nation and to the world at large. "The very best environment for a baby to grow and thrive is the mother's body". The mother's body is the only natural, healthy environment for a new born baby. The basic needs of a preterm baby include love, touch, warmth, safety and security. Kangaroo care is an effective way to meet the baby's needs like warmth, breast feeding, and protection from infection, stimulation, safety and love. Kangaroo Mother Care is also known as skin to skin care. Kangaroo Mother Care satisfies all five senses of the baby. The baby feels the warmth of the mother through skin to skin contact (touch) , she listens to mother's voice and heart beat (hearing) , sucks on breast (taste) , has eye contact with mother (vision) and smells mother's odour (olfaction). The mothers are used as "incubators" and as the main source of food and stimulation for preterm babies while they mature enough to face extra uterine life.

II. Therapeutic Effects Of Kangaroo Mother Care:

Kangaroo Mother Care is believed to be beneficial for both new-borns and parents. Literature reveals the following benefits.

Preterm baby

- Normalizes infant physiology
- Provides warmth to the baby
- Promotes lactation, ensures more successful breast feeding
- Improves weight gain
- Minimizes hospital stay
- Promotes baby mother bonding
- Promotes deep sleep
- Reduction of gastric reflux
- Increased feeling of security

Parents

- Lactation for longer period
- More milk production
- Decreases parental stress
- Promotion of self confidence
- Low cost

III. Therapeutic Procedures Of Kangaroo Mother Care

A. Preparation phase

1. Counsel mother regarding

- Importance of KMC.
- Time and duration of KMC.
- Clothing for baby and mother.

2. Preparation of the unit

- Select one bed with a few pillows and blanket. Chair if possible.
- Articles for checking vital signs and weighing.

3. Preparation of mother

- Explain the procedure.
- Ask to go to toilet if needed and wash hands thoroughly.
- Sit comfortably after wearing front open gown/or other dress which is convenient.

4. Preparation of baby

- Caps, socks and nappy to be put on the baby.

B. Performance phase

1. Wash hands thoroughly
2. Check baby weight without clothing (Daily weight checking in the morning)
3. Take temperature, heart rate, respiration, O₂ saturation and observe for skin color and note it.
4. Put the baby in kangaroo position

Kangaroo position

- Place the baby between mother's breasts in an upright position direct skin-to-skin contact.
- Turn the baby's head to one side.
- Keep the head in slightly extended position.
- Keep the baby's ear on the mother's heart.
- Place the baby's abdomen at the level of the mother's epigastrium.
- Position the baby's hip, flexed and abducted like a frog and elbows are flexed.
- Ask the mother to hold the baby in position.
- Apply a binder/cloth (upper border of the binder should be below the baby's ear).
- Close the mother's gown (baby's face should be outside of the gown).
- Instruct mother either to sit or recline in a chair or bed whatever she likes & support the baby's body and neck by her own hands.
- Duration 4 hours per day. (2 hours / sitting, 2 sittings / day)
- Kangaroo Mother care timing in between morning 7.00am to 9.00am and evening 5.00pm to 7.00pm

C. Care after Kangaroo Mother Care

- Advice to continue breast feeding.
- Ask to increase the duration of KMC session as much as possible.
- Maintain record (KMC chart).

IV. Research Studies Related To Therapeutic Effects Of Kmc On Preterm Babies

Maternal attachment scores were higher among the Kangaroo Mother Care mothers. (Ahn et al 2010). Babies had less morbidities like hypothermia, apnea and skin infections. 100% babies had exclusive breast feeding and KMC was acceptable to mothers. (Subedi et al. 2009).

KMC improves growth in low birth weight and preterm infants, and has a significant role to play in protecting them from hypothermia and sepsis, as well as promoting exclusive breastfeeding. KMC helps to reduce neonatal mortality, and inculcates confidence and a better sense of parenting in mothers with regard to their babies' needs. (Shrivastava SR et al. 2013). Kangaroo Mother Care may be helpful in mediating physiologic response to painful procedures in preterm infants. (Cong et al. 2009).

V. Conclusion

Kangaroo Mother Care does not need expensive and sophisticated equipment, and for its simplicity it can be applied almost everywhere, including peripheral maternity units of very low income families. So, educational programme on Kangaroo Mother Care can be provided to Nurses, Nursing student, and primary health workers which in turn will improve the preterm care.

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