

## KANGAROO MOTHER CARE (KMC) PRACTICE IN THE PHILIPPINES

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The standard practice of KMC in the Philippines started in 1999 at Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital in Manila, after two of its NICU healthcare staff were trained in Bogota, Colombia, with support from Arci Cultura e Sviluppo, an Italian NGO in the Philippines. Pilot implementation for one year was initially done and with favourable data on improved neonatal outcomes, the program was fully adopted and institutionalized in 2000. Subsequent policy and implementing guidelines were outlined and continuous quality improvement measures through surveys and research have sustained this program to the present. After retirement from government service, the medical coordinator of the program (Dr. Mendoza) together with other medical and non-medical professionals felt the need to propagate KMC nationwide. Thus, in 2008, the KMC Foundation Philippines was established and registered with the Philippines' Securities and Exchange Commission. To date, three (3) other regional hospitals nationwide are serving as centers of excellence and training in KMC and one (1) is currently in the pilot stage after receiving the full training course early this year. All programs, including that of the pioneer center (Fabella Hospital) are continuously being monitored by the foundation to assure quality of program implementation is sustained.

In the private sector and on an individual basis, many Neonatologists and Pediatricians have adopted the KMC practice in their care for the LBW. A recent survey of the state of KMC practice and the need to enhance training in the private sector will be presented. In the past two years, the Foundation gained support from the industry (Johnson & Johnson Philippines) and the Perinatal Association of the Philippines through a joint-implementation and adoption of the KMC program in selected hospitals in Manila. The same organization will help propagate the program in other regions of the Philippines in the coming years. Research in KMC is also a thrust of the Foundation, giving financial as well as technical support for the conduct of research, presentation in research forums, and publication in medical journals.

As more hospitals adopt the standard KMC program for all LBW's, the Foundation envisions a favourable impact on the Philippines' neonatal mortality, morbidity and quality of life for the future of this compromised population of low-birth-weight neonates.

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