

## **P 53. THE UNDERSTANDING AND PERCEPTIONS OF MOTHERS PRACTICING KANGAROO MOTHER CARE AT KALAFONG HOSPITAL**

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**Background:** The kangaroo mother care (KMC) method requires support for mothers to become the primary caretakers of their infants. The support includes information about KMC, general health care education and teaching the mothers specific feeding and caring skills that would enable them to feed and take care of their infants.

**Aim:** To examine the mother's knowledge and understanding of KMC and their perceptions of the health worker practices in the Neonatal units at Kalafong Hospital.

**Method:** Qualitative data was collected by:

- 1 In-depth interviews with mothers who had been discharged from the KMC-unit.
- 2 Focus group discussions with mothers who were in the KMC-unit. The interviews were conducted by a trained and experienced research assistant.
- 3 Results: Apart from positive feedback the following shortcomings were identified:

Lack of information on:

- Practice of KMC
- Condition and progress of infant
- Special investigations and results
- General care of premature infants
- What is expected at discharge
- How to take care of infant at home.

Lack of support with:

- Orientation of parents
- Positioning and securing infant in
- KMC position
- Feeding methods

**Conclusion:** Mothers practicing KMC need better information and support from the health care workers.

**Key words:** Kangaroo mother care, preterm, support, information