

P 2. MATERNAL RELAXATION DURING SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT (KMC) Sheau-Huey Chiu¹, Gene Cranston Anderson⁺

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Background: KMC has many benefits, including reduced infant crying and improved breastfeeding. Mothers often say they feel relaxed, a phenomenon observed by researchers and clinicians but not yet documented. Importantly, relaxation reduces sympathetic activity and stress.

Aim: Explore the relaxation response when healthy mothers and their infants experience KMC early postpartum. **Questions:** 1) Does maternal relaxation occur? 2) Do all mothers relax? 3) How long is latency to relaxation? 4) Do self-report and objective measures correlate?

Materials and Methods: In this repeated measures design, the sample is 30 consenting mothers with healthy fullterm infants born vaginally. While each mother-infant dyad experiences KMC for 30 minutes, maternal muscle tension, electrodermal response, heart rate, and skin temperature are recorded (proComp+, Thought Technology). Self-report of relaxation onset is documented by stopwatch, and relaxation and anxiety with visual analogue scales. Results: Data analysis includes descriptive statistics (sample demographics, study variables, maternal relaxation trend), paired t-tests (changes in outcome measures), Pearson correlation (relationship between subjective and objective measures). **Conclusions:** Data collection is underway to complete analyses by September. If successful, this protocol will be used to study healthy infants, vulnerable populations (e.g., depressed mothers, preterms, minorities), dyadic synchrony/asynchrony in latency, and effects of various environments. **Key Words:** Kangaroo Mother Care, skin-to-skin, relaxation, stress, anxiety, postpartum