

Title: "Kangaroo Mother Care: Parents' and Nurses' Opinions and Problems"

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Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) was introduced in our NICU in 1994. During a two years period, 138 infants with birth weight ranging from 580 to 2000 g and gestational age from 25 to 38 wks were cared for with KMC. They represented about 95% of infants under 2000g assisted in our unit.

In 1996, two questionnaires, one for parents and one for nurses, were developed to assess the acceptance of this practice. The questionnaires were individual and anonymous. 73 out of 105 couple of parents contacted and all the 15 nurses working in the NICU filled in the questionnaires.

The large majority of nurses (all young and strongly motivated) expressed their acceptance of KMC and its usefulness for the parents and infants; some difficulties were reported about time to devote to the parents and technical problems such as the presence of peripheral intravenous lines. The presence of a central IV line (umbilical or percutaneous catheters) or the need for O2 therapy or CPAP was not felt as an obstacle to KMC. 80% of nurses expressed the need to increase the time and the location dedicated to KMC. 67% of them reported having perceived conflictual feelings and a skeptical attitude by the parents towards nurses and KMC at the beginning, but not in the following weeks.

The parents expressed a high level of acceptance of KMC. They also showed an unanimous, firm belief of the importance of KMC for the promotion of: a) the relationship with their baby; b) the acceptance of the NICU environment; c) their feeling of being useful and active in the care of their infant and d) a better parent-staff relationship.

The information resulting from the questionnaires helped us to improve the organization of KMC and the motivation of the whole staff in the unit, which in our opinion is a major factor in promoting and improving KMC.