

O 7. EFFECT OF KMC INTERVENTION IN AN EGYPTIAN NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT ON THE DEPRESSION SCORES OF MOTHERS AND HEALTH OUTCOMES OF NEONATES

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Background: Egypt has had tremendous success with the reduction of its infant mortality rates over the past decades, yet neonatal mortality and morbidity remain a challenge particularly among preterms and low birth weights (LBW). Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) for newborns is a globally

accepted and recommended method for caring for all newborns due to its proven benefits to mother and child. However in Egypt this method is as yet not commonly used. **Aim:** To assess the effect of implementation of KMC on the psychological

status of mothers, health outcome of neonates and attitudes of staff towards implementing it in Egyptian Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs). **Material and methods:** Ninety mother-infant pairs with 30 LBW infants exposed to KMC in the Cairo University Hospital NICU and 60 LBW infants cared by the traditional incubator care in Zagazig and Benha University NICUs. The latter group was subdivided according to type of feeding into 30 exclusively breastfed infants and 30 artificially fed infants. The 90 mothers were subjected to assessment of depressive scores using the Beck Depression Inventory at 6 weeks postpartum. Knowledge, attitudes and practice of staff in

the target NICUs were studied before and after the exposure to KMC.

Results: Mothers who practiced breastfeeding and KMC had a statistically significant decrease in their depression scores when compared to mothers who were separated from their babies through traditional care and/or were not breastfeeding. Health outcomes in the different groups were compared and were shown to be superior with both KMC and exclusive breastfeeding.

Staff exposed to the intervention showed a significant improvement in their attitudes towards exclusive breastfeeding but not towards KMC. **Conclusions:** KMC has positive effects on maternal and neonatal outcomes. However there is considerable resistance towards implementation of

this method in our hospitals. It is recommended that culturally suitable interventions that can impact change in attitudes towards KMC and exclusive breastfeeding in NICUs are needed in Egypt if neonatal mortality and morbidity is to be properly addressed.

Key words: Kangaroo Mother Care, depression scores, health outcomes, exclusive breastfeeding, Egypt