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Kangaroo Mother Care, home environment and father involvement in the first year of life: a randomized controlled study

Abstract

AIMS: This study tested the hypothesis that **Kangaroo Mother Care** creates a climate in the family, which enhances infants' performance on the developmental quotient scale. **SETTING:** The largest social security hospital in Colombia with a neonatal intensive **care** unit. **SUBJECTS:** At 12 months of corrected age, 194 families in the **Kangaroo Mother Care** group and 144 families in the Traditional **Care** group were available for analysis. **INTERVENTIONS:** Infants were kept 24 h/day in an upright position, in skin-to-skin contact until it was no longer tolerated by the infants. Babies in the Traditional **Care** were kept in incubators on the Minimal **Care** Unit until they satisfied the usual discharge criteria. **OUTCOME MEASURES:** The Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME), Father Involvement and Developmental Quotient (Griffiths) scores. **RESULTS:** 1) **Kangaroo mothers** created a more stimulating context and a better caregiving environment than **mothers** in the Traditional **Care** group; 2) this environment was positively correlated to father involvement and 3) the family environment of male infants was most improved by **Kangaroo Mother Care**. **CONCLUSION:** **Kangaroo Mother Care** has a positive impact on home environment. The results also suggest, first, that both parents should be involved as direct caregivers in the **Kangaroo Mother Care** procedure and secondly, that this intervention should be directed more specifically at infants who are more at risk at birth. The **Kangaroo Mother Care** intervention could be an excellent means to ensure parents' mature involvement in the future of their children.