

The Effect of Short Duration Skin to Skin Contact on Premature Infants? Physiological and Behavioural Outcomes: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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Abstract: Purpose: This study aimed at assessing the effect of short duration Skin to skin contact (SSC) (5 days) on premature infants? short-term physiological and behavioral outcomes. Design and Methods: A quasi-experimental control group design was utilized. 89 stable premature infants were allocated to either an interventional or control group. Results: Results showed that in comparison to the control group, newborns in the SSC group demonstrated higher weight gain (g/day) from day 3-5 of practicing SSC (53.7g Vs. 32.6 g; $p<.05$), experienced significantly fewer numbers of apneas (48% Vs. 33.3%; $p=.001$), and were less likely to use formula feeding (60% Vs. 90%) and more likely to use mixed feeding (formula and breastfeeding) at discharge (33.3% Vs. 10%). Significant differences were also found in the crying, and sleeping patterns of the infants; infants of mothers who practiced SSC were less likely to cry in a continuous pattern and more likely to experience good sleep than infants in the control group. Conclusions: The study highlights the importance of the early and short duration of SSC for premature infants. Practice Implications: The initiation of SSC in the first few days of life may have a significant influence on the newborn?s short-term outcomes.