

**KANGAROO CARE FOR PREMATURE INFANTS: IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT
AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES.**

KOSHANOVA AMANGUL MAMBETNIYAZOVNA

Karakalpakstan Medical Institute

Introduction

Kangaroo care (KMC) for premature infants is one of the most effective and physiologically sound approaches in neonatology. First proposed in the 1970s in Colombia, the method relies on providing constant skin-to-skin contact between mother and infant, which helps create conditions for thermoregulation, stimulation of breastfeeding, and psychological bonding between mother and infant. Research shows that KMC can significantly improve short- and long-term outcomes for premature infants, including cognitive development and reduced risk of hospitalization [1].

Benefits of Kangaroo Mother Care for Physiological Development

KMC has a significant impact on physiological processes such as thermoregulation, heart rate, and respiratory rate. A study of 300 premature infants showed that infants receiving KMC had a 50% reduction in hypothermia compared to traditional incubator care [2].

Other studies indicate that infants receiving KMC have more stable oxygen saturation levels (an average of 5% higher than the control group) and fewer apnea episodes [3]. These physiological improvements can be explained by direct contact with the mother’s body, which helps the infant maintain a stable state.

Impact on Cognitive Development

Long-term cognitive outcomes in infants receiving KMC show positive trends. A 2023 study involving 187 children from different regions of the Republic of Karakalpakstan found that at age five, children who were in CMU during the neonatal period had higher cognitive test scores (on average 10% higher) than children who were in incubators. In addition, children who received CMU showed a 15% improvement in verbal and motor skills.

Table 1. Comparison of cognitive indicators of children who were in KMC and incubators:

Indicators	KMC	Incubator
Verbal skills	85%	70%
Motor skills	90%	75%
Cognitive tests	95%	85%

Psycho-emotional and social consequences

KMC also improves the psycho-emotional state of the child and mother. According to a meta-analysis conducted in 2022, mothers who practiced KMC demonstrated lower levels of postpartum depression (40% lower) and greater attachment to the child compared to those who used standard care methods [4].

For children, KMC reduces the risk of anxiety and depressive symptoms in adolescence. A study of 150 adolescents found that those receiving KMC had a 25% lower risk of developing anxiety disorders than those in the control group [5].

Cost-effectiveness of KMC

KMC also has economic benefits, especially in resource-poor countries. According to a WHO study, the introduction of KMC in Latin American hospitals has reduced neonatal care costs by 30% due to a shorter hospital stay and lower costs for medical equipment [6].

Conclusions

KMC is an effective and physiologically sound alternative to traditional intensive care. It improves thermoregulation, reduces the risk of hypoxia, improves cognitive and motor skills, and improves the emotional state of both mother and child. Long-term studies show a positive effect of KMC on children's mental health, and this method can be considered a priority care strategy in resource-poor settings [7].

LIST OF REFERENCES

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