# Thermal protection of the new born during carrying: an evaluation of parents' practices

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**Introduction:** Public health guidelines on how to ensure babies' thermal protection are available (e.g. dressing with 1 extra layer of clothing than the adult); yet little is known on the strategies that parents adopt to ensure their babies' thermal protection when these are carried in a sling (i.e. babywearing). The aim of this study was to survey parents' practices during babywearing with regards to baby dressing and thermal monitoring in the heat and cold.

**Method:** Participants undertook an anonymous online questionnaire aimed at establishing a) demographics; b) knowledge of guidelines for babies' safety (e.g. thermal protection and sleeping position); c) babywearing practices in the heat and cold (e.g. number of clothing layers placed on babies); d) thermal monitoring (e.g. parts of the babies' body used to determine their thermal state); e) subjective thermal responses (e.g. babies' body parts that become hotter during babywearing).

**Results:** 317 responders (98% females) completed the questionnaire. Most participants carried their baby outdoor (66%), more than once a week (67%), and between 30 min and 1 h (53%). Only 33% of participants were aware of guidelines on baby dressing, whereas 97% of responders had knowledge of safe sleeping guidelines. Most participants reported to dress babies in 1 layer less than if using a pram during both warm (52%) and cold (52%) days. They also reported they would touch their babies' skin to determine their temperature (90%), and that during both warm (87%) and cold days (95%), their babies' trunk becomes the warmest regions.

**Conclusions:** We show that knowledge of public health guidelines for babies' thermal protection during babywearing is comparatively low that of safe sleeping. Yet, we observed clear practices amongst parents for both baby dressing and thermal monitoring that consider the thermal impact of babywearing in both warm and cold ambient.