

Infant Massage and Bonding

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PICO Question

Is infant massage effective for increasing social-emotional bonding for infants in acute care settings?

Background & Rationale

Need

Acute care settings do not facilitate caregiver-infant interaction, which is key to proper development.

Background

Infant massage is a soothing tactile stimulation between caregiver and infants under one year of age.

Purpose

This project aims to appraise evidence of the effectiveness of infant massage for increasing social-emotional bonding.

EBP Process

- Step 1** PICO question developed based on practitioner need
- Step 2** Databases searched for relevant articles
- Step 3** Articles selected based on inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Step 4** Evidence appraised and individual CAPs peer reviewed
- Step 5** Integrated into CAT portfolio, reviewed by advisor

Search Methodology

Databases

CINAHL, Cochrane, TRIP, PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus

Search Terms

Infant, babies, NICU, acute care; Infant massage, baby massage, massage therapy, tactile stimulation; Attachment, bonding, social-emotional attachment

Limits

Full text, English-only, published in the last 10 years

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Children under 1 year of age; NICU or acute care; Attachment and bonding for the outcome

Main Findings & Limitations

| Level of Evidence | Quality | Main Findings | Limitations |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| Level 1 | Hartanti, et al., 2019 (70% Quality Score) | ↓ in mother's depressive symptoms ↑ infant sleep | -Completed in a different country -Inclusion/exclusion criteria not included |
| | Holditch-Davis, et al., 2013 (80% Quality Score) | ↑ in social-emotional bonding and interactions after massage | -Mothers in control group could have applied other interventions -Attrition |
| Level 2 | Shongai et al., 2018 (84% Quality Score) | ↑ infant massage accelerates the rate and ↑ attachment | - Small sample size -Hallway noise in NICU during assessment -Presence of research member |
| | Gurol, et al., 2012 (82% Quality Score) | ↑ attachment | -Sample was self-selected -Lack of randomization -Mothers in control group could have applied intervention |
| | Kim, et al., 2017 (82% Quality Score) | ↑ paternal attachment ↑ stabilization of infant's physiological state | -Short period of time between pre- and post-intervention data collection -Lack of randomization -Small sample size |

Key: ↑ = Statistically Significant Increase ↓ = Statistically Significant Decrease

Clinical Bottom Line

Strong evidence supports that infant massage increases social-emotional bonding and attachment.

Infant massage can be effective in a range of doses. Based on the evidence, implementation varied from once per day for 10 minutes to 2-3 times per day for 15 minutes.

Infant massage may have positive effects on sleep quality and physiological states.

Recommendations for Implementation

Recommend using infant massage in an acute care setting and in the home to increase social-emotional bonding and attachment

There is certification available to provide infant massage. Once you are trained you can teach caregivers and providers.

References



Data Tracking Sheet

