

# KANGAROO MOTHER CARE : LEARNING FROM NATURE TO SUSTAIN

With the social and economic advancement of Bangladesh, women of our country are gradually getting more involved in economic activities. Thus working women are entering into a more stressful lifestyle. Again, the opportunity of living in a joint family in the big cities is also becoming narrow because of high cost of living. Thus they have to go through the stress of their working place as well as the household duties. Studies show that women who experience high level of stress during their pregnancy period have a 25% to 60% higher risk for premature delivery.

During the 1970s, Colombian physicians Dr. Edgar Rey Sanobria and Dr. Hector Martinez Gomez, observed a similar type of premature delivery among Kangaroos as a natural phenomenon. The Kangaroo newborn (Joey) is usually delivered prematurely into its mother's pouch and grows there up to a certain period of their life. It is the mother's pouch that provides not only the necessary warmth to prevent it from losing its body temperature, but also keeps the baby close to the mother's breasts for unlimited feeding. These two physicians then tried to use this experience upon the preterm newborns to curb the overcrowded and inadequate resources in neonatal intensive care unit. They started to place the premature newborn naked (except for a diaper, cap, mitten and socks) on their mother's uncovered chest ensuring skin to skin contact and got beneficial results. This procedure helped them to reduce the congestion in incubators. They named it Kangaroo Mother Care ("KMC"). After several scientific trails and validation, the World Health Organization has accepted KMC as a standard care to decrease morbidity and mortality among premature newborns.

In Bangladesh, 1 in 10 babies are born preterm (before 37 completed weeks of gestation). Globally 15 million babies are born too soon every year. Worldwide 36% of newborn death

rate due to preterm birth; it means preterm birth is the leading cause of neonatal death. In our country 603700 babies are born prematurely each year and 20,000 children under five die directly due to preterm complications. About 14% of all births in Bangladesh are preterm. Most neonatal death occurs within first week of life. Other than prematurity, neonatal sepsis and perinatal asphyxia are the major cause of death in newborn.

Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) is a proven method for prevention of death of premature and low birth weight babies. It promotes thermal regulation, increases breast feeding and helps to prevent serious infections, thereby decreasing mortality. In developing country like Bangladesh, KMC is a cost-effective intervention for preterm low birth weight babies.

In Bangladesh, health ministry has targeted to establish 220 KMC units all over the country by the year 2022. Till date 193 KMC units are running from tertiary level to Upazila health complex. In Dhaka Medical College, 4 bedded KMC unit is giving service since May 2018, with well equipped logistics and a group of dedicated, well trained health stuffs.

Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) helps not only to develop 5 senses of newborn e.g. touch, vision, hearing, taste and olfaction, but also ensures warmth, infection prevention and early discharge of the tiny preterm newborn. It is one of the easiest tools to achieve SDG goal of reduction of neonatal mortality from 28/1000 live birth (Current) to 12/1000 live birth by the year 2030.

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