

Kangaroo Mother Care Project – Uttar Pradesh

Introduction

Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) is a method of holding a baby with the skin to skin contact. It is a WHO recognized concept originated from Columbia. KMC care lessens the risk of premature babies. This method of care has prevented ~4,50,000 new-borns deaths and 60,000 new-born deaths in UP alone.



Implementation of the practice

- The UP-Kangaroo Mother Care Project was implemented by UP Health department in 2016 in collaboration with Community Empowerment Lab. By 2018, it was rolled out to 13 CHCs of four districts and 42 District Women Hospitals.
- KMC is an innovative method that increases survival chances for underdeveloped, underweight and pre-mature new-borns. It is a simple technique, where the mother holds her new-born to her chest (>20 hours a day) and breastfeeds it. This skin on skin contact and the nutritive qualities of mother's milk, together, have proven to relax hyperventilation, bring down hypothermia (increase body temperature) and keep the child away from infections.
- In this initiative, Kangaroo Care lounges have been created under Special Neonatal Care Units. The Kangaroo Care Lounges is a comfortable arrangement with large rooms where caregivers (usually mothers) can recline themselves by placing the baby over their chest and cover their body with linen to facilitate heat transfer.
- Key strategies attributing to the success of project:
 - Awareness of KMC has been created through an innovative hug program
 - Beautifully designed KMC lounges to maximize the comfort of the mother during a prolonged stay
 - CSR partnership has been made for essential supplies for KMC which includes cap, mittens, blankets, diapers, etc.
- Trained health workers provided IEC (information, education and communication) on KMC during the antenatal period along with essential new-born care messages. These messages were reinforced during the postnatal period.

Results of the practice

- According to WHO, kangaroo mother care is a safe and effective alternative to conventional neonatal care, especially in under-resourced settings, and may reduce morbidity and mortality in Low Birth Weight (LBW) infants as well as increase breastfeeding.
- This project avoided 60,000 newborn deaths in UP alone.

Lessons Learnt

This project shows that simple skin to skin contact care can improve the medical conditions of the babies and reduces the risks without any medications or machines. This method cuts the cost of incubators and reduces the need for repeated hospitalisation.

Conclusion

The simplicity of the project is the biggest strength for scaling the project. Awareness creation and acceptability is the biggest challenge in this initiative. Different approaches to increase awareness must be designed by analysing the cultural and social background of the community for the success of the project.

Further reading

- https://www.who.int/elena/titles/kangaroo_care_infants/en/#:~:text=Evidence%20suggests%20that%20kangaroo%20mother,as%20well%20as%20increase%20breastfeeding.*
- https://nhm.gov.in/images/pdf/in-focus/MP/Day-1/Coffeetable_Book.pdf*
- <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/12578-kangaroo-care>*