THE EXPERIENCE OF THE KANGAROO METHOD: THE PERCEPTION OF THE FATHER

LA EXPERIENCIA DEL MÉTODO CANGURO: LA PERCEPCIÓN DEL PADRE

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ABSTRACT

Objective: identifying the father’s perception about the Kangaroo Method; pointing forms of nursing contribution in favor of the father and son. Method: research sets up descriptive and exploratory, with a qualitative approach, performed at the Maternity Leila Diniz, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. We interviewed six parents of preterm and/or low birth weight through a semi-structured interview analyzed according to Content Analysis in the Thematic Mode. The research project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee, protocol nº 150/2012. Results: Kangaroo Method encourages family life with the baby, contributing to the intra-family bonding, and positively influences the father and son approach, and cooperating for the start of a loving relationship. Conclusion: the father’s rapprochement with his son, and his partner, also coming from the Kangaroo method, must be sought and encouraged by the nursing staff.

Descriptors: Infant, Low Birth Weight; Kangaroo Mother Care; Family Relations; Nursing.

RESUMEN


Descritores: Recém-Nascido de Baixo Peso; Método Mãe-Canguru; Relações Familiares; Enfermeira.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: identificar la percepción del padre acerca de la experiencia del Método Canguro; apuntar las formas de contribución de la enfermería a favor del padre y el hijo. Método: la investigación establece descriptivo y exploratorio con abordaje cualitativo, realizado en la Maternidad Leila Diniz, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil. Entrevistamos a seis padres de los neonatos prematuros y/o de bajo peso al nacer, a través de una entrevista semiestruetrada, analizada como Análisis de Contenido en la Modalidad Temática. El proyecto de investigación fue aprobado por el Comité de Ética en la Investigación, número de protocolo nº 150/2012. Resultados: el Método Canguro fomenta la vida familiar con el bebé, lo que contribuye a la unión dentro de la familia, e influye positivamente el enfoque de padre e hijo, y coopera para el inicio de una relación amorosa. Conclusión: el acercamiento del padre con su hijo, y su compañeraque de padre e hijo, y cooperar, también procedente del Método Canguro, debe buscarse y alentado por el personal de enfermería.

Descritores: Madre de Bebe a Nacer; Método Madre Canguro; Relaciones Familiares; Enfermera.

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Pregnancy and childbirth are times inherent in the female life cycle, establishing itself as a physiological process, in which a woman must be the protagonist in every moment of these events. Soon, it is for services, managers and professionals develop and actualize public policies that guarantee the right to quality of integral and humanized care, and that meets the promotion of women's health and their child. In this context comes the Kangaroo Method, to promote the quality of obstetric care.

The Kangaroo Mother Care has introduced a new care model to implement a natural and humane way to promote the adaptation and evolution of the babies after birth, being conceived in 1979 in Bogota, Colombia, Children's Medical Institute. It is based on a program whose main objective was to use the mother's body as a source of heat, cheapening the costs of perinatal care and promoting, through skin-to-skin early between the woman and her baby, and contributing a greater bonding, thermal stability and development of newborn.

In the early 90s, the Kangaroo method began to be implemented in Brazil. In 2000, by launching the Program for Humanization of Prenatal and Birth (PHPN), the Ministry of Health (MOH) has set standards for the implementation of the method by means of Decree n° 693/00. The adoption of care in the Kangaroo Method is an essential strategy for institutional change in the pursuit of health care centered on the humanization of care and the principle of citizenship and family.

So Brazil has appropriated public policy Kangaroo Method developed in Colombia, allowing the incorporation of this technology for effective production of quality newborns of low weight.

Thus, the method is understood as a type of neonatal assistance directed to the attention of preterm infants and low weight that is to place the baby in skin-to-skin with the mother or father.

The news of the arrival of a baby provides significant changes to the family and the social group that interacts with it. Arise expectations, projects and new demands on the performance of roles for each member of this family, but with the birth of premature baby and/or low birth weight, parents need to accept this reality, because the greater the denial, the distance between the real baby and the baby dreaming, the more difficult the acceptance and conviviality.

Every year are born about 20 million preterm babies and low birth weight (less than 2.500g) worldwide. Among these, one third dies before reaching one year old. The leading causes of mortality of these newborns in Brazil are: respiratory problems, birth asphyxia and infections. In addition, many of these are affected by metabolic disorders, feeding difficulties and thermoregulation.

In this sense, according to the social, especially those that touch the relations and male and female roles, the man who becomes a father today, requires special attention because it is destitute of social support and stable subjective references. This has required him literally create, day by day, the forms of their integration into society and family.

As the Kangaroo Method is facing the skin-to-skin of the father and/or mother with the newborn, if practiced will provide a link between all. The participation of the parent at this time is extremely important because this approach will stimulate the contact with your baby, strengthening more and more the emotional bond. From this perspective paternality is influenced, and understood as a participatory process that implies careful and constant involvement in everyday children.

Still, the paternal function has been changing over time and a few years men have been claiming their role and place of father in the family, giving rise to a category of "new parents", subjects who take pleasure in being parents and invest in zeal to the children. The term “fathering” is to designate such tasks developed by these and from that involvement begins to rise to a relationship of affection between this binomial.

Regarding the emotional bond between parents and their child, this process does not happen instantly; it should be seen as continuous. That does not mean parents at an early stage have difficulties with their baby, no longer form emotional bonds with it.

The early bond between parents and newborns, fostered by greater interaction of men with their children can give them, early experiences of loving contact with his father’s body. Through this act, the degree and intensity of love that the father can devote to his baby that allows it to explore his feelings.

**OBJECTIVE**

- Identifying the father’s perception about the experience of the Kangaroo Method.
- Aiming forms of nursing contribution in favor of the father and son.
METHOD

It is a descriptive exploratory study with a qualitative approach aimed to exposure accurately the reality shown by facts and phenomena investigated.10

Study participants were six (6) men, parents of preterm and/or low birth weight, Maternity Leila Diniz, linked to the Municipal Secretariat of Health and Civil Defense (SMSC) of the city of Rio de Janeiro. The choice for that institution was given the same be one of the hospitals referenced in the Kangaroo Care in the state of Rio de Janeiro. All they signed the Informed Consent and Informed (IC) conditioned their participation, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of information, confirmed with the use of an alpha-numeric code (P1 … P6). Inclusion criteria: taken into consideration: 1) biological parents of premature infants and/or low birth weight; 2) Men over 18 years of age; 3) Experiencing the Kangaroo; 4) Interest participate.

For data collection was conducted semi-structured interview through open and closed questions. Data collection took place during the months of November and December 2012, at the hospital. The interviews were recorded on digital machine with authorization of the participants; and subsequently proceeded to the transcript of the testimony, before the completion of the analysis.

To analyze the data collected, we opted for the formulation of content analysis, through thematic modality. Content analysis is defined as a set of communication analysis techniques, to obtain, through systematic procedures and description of goals of message content, indicators (quantitative or not) that allow the interference of knowledge about the conditions of production/ reception (dismissed variables) of these messages.11 This enabled discuss and establish the view to achieving the stated objective of the study.

After transcribing the interviews, the material was subjected to thorough reading to facilitate the understanding and interpretation of the data, and then the following steps were submitted: pre-analysis; exploration of the material; treatment of results, inference and interpretation.11

From the Registration Unit that emerged, the construction of the following thematic categories was possible: 1) Feelings and sensations of the father who experiences the Kangaroo Method; 2) Approach to the (un) known; 3) The construction of the paternal bond.

The research was performed after consideration and approval of the research project by the Ethics Committee of the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro City, being approved as also provides for the Resolution n° 466/12 of the National Health Council, under Protocol n° 150/2012.

RESULTS

♦ Feelings and sensations of the father who experiences the Kangaroo Method

Positive and negative feelings and sensations of parents about the child admitted in the ward kangaroo permeate the experiences of Kangaroo Care.

The exchange of warmth and affection between the premature infant and/or low birth weight and parents is important for the family strengthening. The love and emotion are feelings that often do not need to be told, but that can be perceived through gestures, glances and tears. Parents during the interview left transpire great positive emotion in speaking, moving with great clarity what they experienced during the practice, as in the following statements:

In my heart I feel a strange business, see? It is an emotion, love even, understand? (P3)
It is very difficult to express in words. […] I have no words to tell you how good it is. Sorry I cried now, but it's being very important in my life. (P5)
I don't know if you will understand, but every time I put into this track on my chest, is as always for the first time. The heart beats stronger, I'm sweaty, and my legs are shaking. And always gets me. (P6)

The father experiences warm feelings of fullness in relation to his baby experiencing the Kangaroo moment, following the statements of the respondents:

I can only say this moment is unique. (P4)
Excited me a lot when she was born, but to experience this moment is unique, indescribable. (P5)
And be present and following the recovery of my daughter is everything to me. […] You are here right now practicing kangaroo with her is priceless. It is only this moment. (P6)

The pleasure in performing the Kangaroo Method is notorious among parents who practice it. They feel an immense satisfaction of being closer to their son. This link refers to skin contact, which is understood by them as a welfare/pleasure:

Sunday is my day off and I'm sure I will come early in the morning to spend the day with them and do the Kangaroo Method with my little Princess. It will be very pleasurable. (P4)
It is a so simple and pleasurable method. (P5)
I can tell you that it is very exciting to be here living this moment with her. It is very pleasant that time. (P6)

The skin to skin contact should be established early between parents and premature newborns and/or low birth weight increasingly and by the time understand to be pleasurable and sufficient, allowing greater involvement in that care. Parents report a moment of beauty while performing the method as follows in the statements:

Doing the Method is very beautiful. I love seeing the two tied sitting. [...] Now when I see him wrapped in this cloth in her lap, I find it very beautiful. (P3)

I feel it also very beautiful. (P4)

Before experiencing the method, these parents go through psycho-emotional suffering during the hospital stay of their children in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Thus, it becomes weaker interaction with the newborn. They express fear and insecurity, in the speeches:

The danger of losing him moved me enough. [...] At this moment I have no courage to do. It is very tiny, very fragile. I'm afraid to pick up. (P3)

To creating safety the most, right? Because they are very fragile and it involves much. [...] When she was dressed with the blanket, she is more strong, does not so afraid to pick up, the more it naked, gives jumpy. It is very soft. (P4)

I did not dare to touch her. It was very small and skinny. I was afraid to pick up and hurt. This for a father is frustrating. (P6)

In this sense, the fear of losing something expected, pleasant and harmonious aims to stake out a negative experience at public expense of newborn health.

♦ Approach with the (un) known

The perceptions of fathers who experience the Kangaroo Method, knowledge, ignorance, is the lack of information and interest in relation to this new practice are issues to be evaluated by the team.

The knowledge that parents have regarding the method is expressed in the following statements:

I go to Kangaroo Animal Logic. He has a bag and when the puppy is born it gets a little time in there warming and hoping he mature to go around the outside. [...] I think here they were inspired by the bug, because what they do with the mother and the child is very similar. The child when born before 9 months does not have its fully formed body to face the world outside the womb, which is very warm. (P4)

The Kangaroo Method is when you put your tiny baby tied on a track in your chest. (P6)

The experience of the kangaroo method...

The Kangaroo Mother Care encourages and values the presence and participation of parents aiming note of them on the possibilities of approximation in the neonatal unit, playing an important role in ensuring the health of these babies, it provides breastfeeding and the formation of emotional bonds. But often these parents are unaware of the method and neither are they told they can participate, as in the following statements:

I didn't know that the father could do […] I didn't even know I had the method. (P1)

I didn't know. Nobody told me. (P3)

I didn't know I could. When she came here I just took up and ready. (P6)

And when the team strives disclosing such information, the interest of parents in performing the Method increases, as in the following statements:

It's much interesting. (P3)

I found it interesting because it stimulates the parent to participate in child care. (P4)

Then, I spoke with the technician and asked if I could. (P6)

From this perspective, the information and clarification of the Kangaroo Method is an important tool for the inclusion of fathers in the fathering process and favoring the bond in a purely unknown space.

♦ The construction of the paternal bond

The Kangaroo positively influenced the approach of parent-child pair, favoring the beginning of a loving relationship.

The approach to the newborn, outlining the new parent model, makes the man share every moment of his child's life, as well as the daily care with his spouse/partner. As shown in the following statements:

I think every parent should do this, because we too close with the small. (P2)

After he came here approached me much, I did not recognize me. (P3)

For me it is more than a Method. [...] It offers you the approach to the child. It seems that teaches you to become a father because're encouraging you to stick with it. (P5)

I found pretty cool because it makes us even closer to the child, at least that's what I think. (P6)

Care through touch is associated with the sense of comforting, understanding that the care for these parents is more than an action; it is an act of recognition of their own child and also its role as an agent in the recovery of the same, as shown in the statements below:

You see that you can help your child with such a small and simple gesture. (P1)

I am here participating in this important moment for the recovery of this girl. (P3)
The experience of the kangaroo method...

The formation and strengthening of emotional ties is one of the most important benefits of Kangaroo Care, for love and complicity provided to all the practice bring all other advantages, such as security in family actions that end up emerging from the look, the touch and affection.

DISCUSSION

The participation of parents in the Kangaroo Method demonstrates positive results of this experience, revealing their satisfaction in performing the practice. These events are perceived by relieving emotional stress and socialization, to exchange experiences, contributing to the process of building a more integral and humanized care, and the family as the focus of neonatal care.12

The closeness between father and child through the Kangaroo method favors the affective bonding, developing attachment, which gives the parent the feeling that the baby is his. This physical closeness is very important and necessary for the development of the bond between parents and children, especially relevant it becomes facilitate this contact, especially in infants who are deprived of it, immediately after birth. Thus, the Kangaroo Method is a measure that promotes close skin to skin, part of the care plan to the child and family, and aimed at providing a vestibular stimulation, tactile, kinesthetic, olfactory and auditory newborn, in addition to foster parental involvement, proximity and parent-infant bonding.13

The benefits of Kangaroo Care for parents and baby are associated with continuous and regular practice, it is hoped that these are better, the longer the kangaroo time and the higher the frequency of its application. The close skin to skin with parents generates warmth, affection and love, which are simple elements, but that combined aid in recovery and provides a moment of exchange. The closer contact with the child and the monitoring of their evolution brings more tranquility to the parents and family.12

Regarding happy to make the method, the newborn has on the parent deep attraction, passing it to focus your interest and attention; fatherhood is lived as an exaltation of experience and feeling of euphoria; before the birth of the child, the father acquires a greater sense of self-esteem.5

The intimate connection of parents with their premature baby could positively affect the relationship of this newborn with the world and reduce the stress of all. The known effect of skin to skin contact as a stimulator

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of the release of oxytocin appears to play an important role in parents' behavior and strongly affect the emotional and sensitive side, facilitating approximation with the child. 14

Thus, the affective relationship between the baby and his parents are extremely pleasurable as it is through contact, look, the cry and the warmth that the child relates and is the main source of welfare, security and affection.

In Kangaroo Method, the baby receives the loving, sweet and serene look, with love and feeling, too harmonious voices that will bring a new language and the beginning of a development in all aspects for this and also for parents, often first time, being the origin of a beautiful and harmonious relationship that starts to be installed through the lullaby. 1,2

When the child is born prematurely experience is painful and stressful for the father, while the most frequent focus in several studies involving only the feelings of the mother. Fear and insecurity, verbalized by parents, result from implementing care, how to catch the infant in her arms, can be attributed to the small size of it compared to a "normal" baby, and its fragility.

During pregnancy, parents prepare a desire to process your child to be perfect. Thus arises the baby conceived an image composed of the representatives of the parents. When there is the birth of premature, devised the figure does not correspond to the real.

The family needs a restructuring and organization towards greater sharing of responsibilities. When parents live together, the participation of the father in this process is of utmost importance to face the situation. 1,2

Knowledge is understood to act or effect of a particular abstract idea or notion of something. The importance of knowledge of the Kangaroo Mother Care has positive effects in the interaction of parent-child binomial. 3,4

In this sense, the quality of the initial list provided by the method, is considered an important mediating factor between perinatal events and their further development. So after birth, the interrelationship is the main form of self-giving, be involved in this approach action, knowledge and acceptance of the other.

The Kangaroo Care was developed as a proposal for humanized care to newborns of low weight with the intention of improving care of them making the participating family, being guided and encouraged to do so with the use of strategies that value the skin to skin contact and the kangaroo position.

Nursing is linked directly into the application of this method, it is necessary to explain its purpose and existing advantages both for the baby and for the father/mother and family, especially regarding the increase of emotional relationship and weight gain. 3

The disclosure of these advantages is one of the main arguments used by health professionals to better adherence of the parents to the proposal, particularly those related to greater weight gain and shorter hospital. 1,7

Thus, the nurse who is in continuous contact with the newborn can promote and effect the use of the method; showing its advantages as the recovery of this, and the enhancement of participation of parents in the care, ensuring the attachment and the strengthening of link between the parent-child binomial. 1,8

The model of paternity perceived in the statements of the respondents indicates that the family relationship has qualified the meaning of fatherhood. That is, with the arrival of the child and the rapprochement with the same, the couple becomes nuclear family and emerge new responsibilities. Collaborate in baby caregiver tasks allows the new father not only traditional feelings of fatherhood, but also to realize the associated active participant of paper. Thus, the Kangaroo Method assists in the first direct contact between the parent-child pair, thus promoting the formation of a paternal bonding.

The insertion of the father, along his mother, in the care of the hospitalized child is a family approach strategy, which should not be seen as an obligation, bringing a concept of fragmented care, focused on the task. 1,2 Man parent can ensure the function education and provider and the role of loving wife, but becomes a paternal function care.

Becoming a parent is one of the most important events in any individual's life cycle, since there are profound changes in the subject’s personality. New parents face a completely different reality, never seen before. They need to make many sacrifices, both of social life and of his own sonship because as parents revert their own childhood experiences, assuming a new role before their own child, that is, now have a psychological suitability to fulfill. 1,9

Historically, the man was not educated in caregiver parent model. Throughout his life has not gone through any kind of training to prepare for and become a father. The tasks related to care for the child and the house
were attributed to women. More over time, this situation is changing. The search for the model of a new parent is away these social subjects from the traditional model of rigid and distant men to share the experience that is experienced by the spouse/partner.

One of humanized approaches to treatment of newborn born prematurely and/or underweight in Kangaroo Care, is to allow intimate contact between mother/father and their baby, providing opportunities and promoting the link between them, which allows the newborn listen to the voice, which lullaby, the very father’s heartbeat and receive caresses. The kangaroo position enables the development of emotional ties in a more natural way because it allows parents to have a skin to skin contact with the infant, helping them to feel more confident in themselves.5

The participation of the father in the method is of utmost importance, even though the small amount of time you spend together, they allow promoting body contact and interaction with the newborn, thus strengthening the psycho-affective development of the baby and the father ensuring safety to care and reduce suffering of their child at this stage. During the method, there is an exchange of warmth. And this, along with the affection between the father-child pair, that are important points for the consolidation of a family relationship. This provides increased confidence of parents in the care of their baby, where they feel more relaxed and have more positive feelings.

The close proximity favored by the Method between the baby and its father, which is achieved with this practice leads to greater involvement of that parent in the care provided to the child, thus allowing the restoration of the link between the binomials. The loving relationship between parents and baby is a continuous and dynamic process of fondling exchanges and emotions, where the search for physical proximity is the main feature of the relationship. Parents and child need to stay next to establish and strengthen emotional bonds, as is the purpose of Kangaroo Method.4,5

The interaction between parents and baby is given to the behavioral level, affective and ghostly, and the foundation for the establishment of attachment, which is a kind of emotional attachment. Addiction results from the reciprocal behaviors and emotional expressions that go giving parents the ability to care and baby safety, security and satisfaction in the relationship with their attachment figures. Over time, the investment in this reciprocal link building a secure base that influences the formation of personality. This whole process of relationship, interaction and attachment are the emotional connection.

CONCLUSION

The Kangaroo Method is a form of humanized care to premature newborns and/or low birth weight. This method encourages family life with the baby, in order to ensure their care, contributing to the strengthening of intra-family bonding.

The first contact between the father and the baby is established through the eyes and the touch; this is a natural process and aims to maintain proximity. The Kangaroo Method helps with this proximity favoring the exchange of affection and the establishment of the link between the father-child pair.

Nowadays the model of new parenthood, where man seeks to experience every moment from pregnancy, makes possible the transformation of social relations of gender and the formation of emotional bonds.

The scientific evidences indicate that the Kangaroo Method is beneficial to the health of premature newborns and/or low birth weight, because it reduces the cost and length of hospital stay, humanizes assistance to those babies, gives more safety and confidence to parents in the care with their child, encourages and increases adherence to breastfeeding and favors family ties.

Searching issues related to participation of the father at birth context of her child identified that changes in human attitudes have contributed to closer this with his baby. Through this study, which contributed to an unveiling of the paternal role, it was found that the perception of parents on the experience of the Kangaroo Method emerged through sensations and positive feelings, as well as insecurity and fears, pointed knowledge and interest when searching for information on these actions and strengthening emotional bonds through the approach and care, encouraging fathering and family ties.

Nursing is linked directly to the application of the Method, since it is responsible for the eligibility of the newborn, mother and family to participate. The nursing contributions in favor of the father-child binomial point for searching, discussion and encouragement of positive feelings and sensations of the father who is living the Method, as well as observation and stoning of insecurities, fears
and frustrations arising from that moment to be overcome. Thus, the father’s closeness with his baby and his partner, also coming from the Kangaroo method, must be sought and encouraged by the nursing staff as it comes to the responsibility with the necessary care to the newborn, as well as fathering and family and emotional bonds.

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