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The long-term effects of the kangaroo mother care intervention on cognitive functioning: Results from a longitudinal study

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Background: The long-term effects of the Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) intervention on the intellectual and attentional functioning of young adults (19-21 years old) born with low birth weight are unknown.

Methods: During initial recruitment, 746 low birth weight infants (≤ 2000 g) were randomly assigned at birth a one of two interventions; the KMC or traditional care (TC). Among this initial sample, 300 (160 KMC; 140 TC) participants completed cognitive tests at adulthood (19 to 21 years after recruitment) measuring intellectual functioning (IQ) as well as sustained and divided attention and attentional flexibility. Results from the cognitive tests at adulthood were analyzed according to the intervention group (KMC or TC) and the neurological status at six months (normal or abnormal).

Findings: Both KMC and TC groups had similar sociodemographic and neonatal characteristics. The results showed that after controlling for sex and growth delay at birth, there was an interaction between the intervention group and the neurological status indicating that participants with a neurological vulnerability at six months had higher scores on the IQ and sustained attention measures at adulthood if they had received KMC. Furthermore, performance on the intellectual and sustained attention measures was similar for KMC/neurologically abnormal group and the KMC or TC neurologically normal groups.

Interpretation: Results from the present study suggest that KMC is an effective treatment to promote cognitive development in low birth weight infants with neurological vulnerabilities and that its benefits on cognitive functioning can still be observed at adulthood.

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Bystander or standing by: Involvement of bystanders in cyber-bullying episodes among adolescents

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Cyber-bullying (CB) is a form of interpersonal aggression that occurs on-line, through electronic means (Bilic, 2013), emerged and increased over the last decade, and has a diverse negative socio-emotional impacts on adolescents well-being. As in traditional bullying the abuse of power in a social context constructed triangle: Perpetrator – victim – bystander. The role of bystanders in CB episodes is uniquely powerful, yet little is known about their behaviors in CB episodes. In cyber space, the peers who witness the harassment can either increase or decrease the harm to victims' lives. Furthermore, by showing compassion and empathy, bystanders can become protectors. The current study explored the bystanders' behavior of involvement in CB episodes among 1094 Israeli adolescents, differentiating between active and passive patterns of behavior and the personal and socio-emotional aspects associated with these patterns. Of the 1,094 participants (ages 12-18), 46.4% were bystanders to CB episodes. Of the bystanders, 55.4% were identified as having a passive pattern of behavior - did not provide help to cyber-victims, whereas 44.6% were identified as having an active pattern - helping cyber-victims. The "active bystanders" are more often girls, older, have more social support from significant others and lower levels of emotional loneliness than the "passive bystanders". Gender and age predicted the probability of being an active bystander. The findings may contribute to developing intervention programs that will focus on providing knowledge and tools for youth of how to encourage and empower peers cyber-victims, thus preventing the spread and further harm of CB and improve adolescents' well-being.

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