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Neonatal Sucking as A Predictor of Neuro Development: A Systematic Review

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Introduction/Rationale: Sucking is the earliest observable behaviour in neonates. Early sucking problem may be a potential marker of neurological deficit. Prediction of later development by observing neonatal sucking may be a useful indicator for early stimulation programs.

Objective: The objective of this review was to investigate the relationship between neonatal sucking and neurodevelopmental outcome.

Design/method: We conducted a systematic review of English language articles using CINAHL, Cochrane, MEDLINE, PubMed and OVID. From the studies done on neonates between 32 weeks to 42 weeks gestation, the data informed us the level of evidence and the risk of bias for each study.

Results: Total of 207 abstracts were generated, but only 14 studies met the inclusion criterion. Early sucking problem is present in a consistent proportion of neonates and were predictive of neurodevelopmental outcome in 13 of the 14 studies reviewed.

Conclusion: Neonatal sucking problem may be related to later developmental outcome. Further research is required to describe precisely its value of prediction and to establish a reliable tool to precisely identify neonatal sucking problems.

References:
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