Author's response to reviews

Title: Perception and practice of Kangaroo Mother Care after discharge from hospital in Kumasi, Ghana: A longitudinal study.

Authors:

Samuel B Nguah (sbnguah@gmail.com)
Priscilla NL Wobil (prischealth@yahoo.co.uk)
Regina Obeng (regina.obeng@yahoo.com)
Ayi Yakubu (ayiyakubu@live.co.uk)
Kate Kerber (kkerber@savechildren.org)
Joy Lawn (joylawn@yahoo.co.uk)
Gyikua Plange-Rhule (gyikua@hotmail.com)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir/Madam,

Submission of revised research article entitled “Perception and practice of Kangaroo Mother Care after discharge from hospital in Kumasi, Ghana: A longitudinal study.”

Dear Sir,

We do appreciate the efforts that you and the reviewers put into reviewing this research article. We have gone through all the comments and adjusted our articles to reflect all of them. The various comment and the effected changes are as below.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]

Dr Samuel Blay Nguah
(BSc MB ChB FWACP)
First Reviewer’s report

Reviewer's report

Reviewer: Suzanne Penfold

Major compulsory revisions

The aim differs between the abstract and main text, and the wording is unclear. The aim needs to be clarified.

*This has been adjusted in the abstract to better reflect the main text*

In the methods it would be useful to know what aspects are usual KMC, and what aspects are additional for the purposes of this study

*This has been indicated in the study site section of the methods*

The hypothesised/desired direction of effect the measures taken is different, and should be presented in three groups:

a. measures that start off high that want to be maintained

b. measures that are not high at the beginning that want to be improved

c. measures that are low at the beginning that want to be kept at low levels or reduced further

*Although the above point is a bit difficult follow we believe we have presented this article in such a way so as to reflect the aims and objectives.*

There is too much discussion that refers to data not presented in the results. If there are qualitative data these could be worth presenting in the results. If not, the discussion of such data should be kept to a minimum.

*Based on the other comments by other reviewers this sections of the discussion that appears not to have been supported by data has been minimised.*

Given that the aim of the study was to evaluate the practice of KMC following discharge from hospital, there seems to be quite a lot of discussion/emphasis on mothers pre-existing knowledge of KMC - this should be reduced

*This section has been cut down to reduce its emphasis.*
The limitations of the study should include that the generalisability of the study is limited by the extra effort made to follow up women following discharge from hospital, which may help to maintain KMC practice more than would happen with normal follow up (the content of this limitation is dependent on the changes made to the methods suggested in point 3)

*This has been inserted as one of the limitations.*

The conclusion is too much a summary of the results. The conclusion needs to say what the study findings mean

*Some section of the results that seem to be directly restating the results have been removed. However we must say it is very difficult to remove any of the rest without compromising the desired message.*

Minor essential revisions

Title should be changed to 'longitudinal study', not 'follow-up study'

*This change has been effected*

Spell out LBW at first use in main text

*This is actually the case and it has been spelt out in the first paragraph of the abstract*

Don’t forget to mention the strengths of the study in the discussion! E.g. low loss to follow up

*This has been added to the discussion section*

Introduction, line 18 - this sentence about KMC is not quite correct. You need to say ‘ encouraging exclusive breastfeeding’, and ‘ facilitating early discharge from hospital’ (and explain how).

*This suggested change has been effected.*

Methods, study procedure - please delete the second sentence (the study should be fully explained to every potential participant, not just those participating- this is already covered under study population)
This suggested change has been effected

Results, first sentence - please delete ‘non-acutely ill newborns’ as this is explained in the next sentence.
This has been done

Discretionary revisions
Introduction, last line page 1 - can you describe how long KMC is usually carried out in hospital?
This has been described in the section dealing with the description of the study site in the methods section.

Second Reviewer’s report

Reviewer: Socorro De Leon-Mendoza

Reviewer's report:
Please see attached:
1. KMC-Biomed article with comments
2. Reviewer's report referenced to the comments annotated in the article

Introduction
Please rephrase. Did you mean a paucity of data on the impact of potentially relevant interventions for the prevention and management of preterm births?
This change has been effected

Methods
Suggest you to just document the functioning equipment
This has been done

Average number of hours?
This change has been effected with “few” being changed to “four to six”
Is this standard protocol for both hospitals? Please indicate average discharge weight and average follow-up rate for specific weight groups before the study was conducted. This is to impress upon the reader whether the conduct of the study itself actually improved follow-up rates or not.

*This is standard but the averages are not available because of poor record keeping.*

**Results**

How many babies did not have their mothers to receive training and give consent and indicate why? Or should the statement read mother and/or legal guardian? This is impt because you are studying “perception and practice” and the legal guardian may significantly differ from that of the mother.

*All babies had their mothers available to consent. The wording of this has been changed to reflect it.*

Besides experience, Is the nurse trained in KMC as well? Was she the only one training all the mothers recruited in the study?

*Yes she is. The wording has been changed to reflect this.*

Why was a written consent not possible? Even if the ERB gave approval, it would be useful to indicate the reason for verbal instead of written consent.

*The explanation to this has been added to the text of the article.*

Please indicate the rationale why this strategy was chosen

*A sentence indicating why the strategy was chosen has been added to the text.*

While in hospital at SGH? Table 1 does not support this statement.

*Absolute numbers have been added to clarify this and make it easy to relate to what is in the table I.*
These data should be in tabular form: Birth data, Recruitment data and Discharge data of both neonate and mother, as outlined in the study method. This is essential, since analysis of follow-up data has been weight-adjusted.

*We are of the opinion that getting this relatively unrelated information into a tabular form will be very difficult. Also this information does not reflect the main objective hence we think it could still be in the text of the results.*

It is important to include data regarding baby’s growth parameters during follow-up visits to support/not support the continued practice of KMC after discharge, as stated in the introduction. *The data is presented in the last two paragraphs of the results section.*

**Discussion**

Please rephrase this statement. Perhaps you might say, “whereas giving water and other feedings are discouraged during breastfeeding, the few mothers who continued to do so at discharge (3.3%) subsequently discontinued the practice on follow-up visits and counselling (0.3%)

*This has been effected*

Please rephrase. Suggest: In KMC, very high exclusive….

*This change has been effected*

Were there other reasons in this statement further and which outcome measures support this statement? Since you included given by the mothers? This is to support the preceding statement of KMC being beneficial to them

*This comment has been removed as it is not supported by our data*

Other growth parameters should be included in the data (comment # 14) to support this statement

*Unfortunately we do not have other growth parameters as that was not our primary objective. We have therefore removed this statement from the conclusion*

Please explain this statement further and which outcome measures support this statement

*The statement has been removed from the conclusion*
**Third Reviewer:** Ekawaty Lutfia L Haksari

**Major compulsory revisions**

**GENERAL ISSUE TO NOTE**

**Abstract**

Some sentences are too long

*Some of these have been shortened*

The key words did not match the method and result in the abstract (preterm, breastfeeding)

*Breastfeeding that did not actually reflect the study has been removed*

**Introduction**

Should be shorter. Some sentences were repeated, it should be in 1 sentence with some references. It is not necessary to repeat information in the narration.

*Sentences appearing to convey the same information have been removed*

To focus on KMC after discharge, reduce morbidity and mortality of LBW

*This has been adjusted accordingly*

**Methods**

Continuous and intermittent KMC should be explained clearly

*These have been further explained in the study site subsection under the methods.*

Different intervention during continuous and intermittent KMC should be posted

*All recruited mother/baby pairs were treated equally with no specific interventions instituted specifically for each group or generally for the whole study participants.*
Follow up only for KMC after discharge, without control group

_The study was designed to describe the continued practice of KMC at home. Controls were therefore not a consideration._

Continuous and intermittent KMC should be compared

_Since mothers kept switching between intermittent and continuous KMC. Comparison between the two groups will therefore not be feasible._

Why was verbal consent used instead of written consent?

_Verbal consent was sought because it was thought all study procedures are very similar to what is routinely practiced at both hospitals._

Since the subjects of the study were mothers who practiced KMC, it’s not necessary to put it in the inclusion criteria

_This has been corrected to reflect what originally intended message was._

Results

There should be more informative description by table: Data when entering the study (mean birth weight, gestational age, age starting KMC) and information about 2 groups

_In our opinion this has been presented as briefly as possible in the earlier part of the results section._

What has been in the table should not have been explained in the result

_We generally presented the few relevant parts of some of the tables that we thought would help explain the results section._

Some of explanations in the narration of table 2 were not appropriate

_This comment is difficult to narrow down but we are confident this has been dealt with after the changes suggested by other reviewers._

Discussion
Some points did not support the data in the result. Not well-managed, too long, confusing.

*We have been through the discussion and are of the opinion that after taking into consideration the changes suggested by the other reviewers this section has been very much improved. The above comment may therefore have been dealt with.*

**Conclusion**

Should be shorter to answer the objective. Some information was not appropriate

*This section has been trimmed down.*