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THE IMPORTANCE OF SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT AND EARLY BREASTFEEDING IN NEWBORN CARE: PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS

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Introduction: The neonatal period is critical for human development, and practices that promote newborn well-being are essential. Skin-to-skin contact (SSC) and early breastfeeding are interventions that have demonstrated significant benefits, both physiological and psychological, for the newborn and the mother. SSC is a practice that involves physical contact between the mother and the newborn, promoting thermal regulation, stabilization of heart rate and increased levels of oxytocin and prolactin. Early breastfeeding, defined as the first feeding that occurs in the first hour of life, is essential for the establishment of lactation and for the transfer of antibodies, contributing to the baby's immunity. **Methodology:** The research was conducted in databases such as PubMed, Scielo and LILACS, using the descriptors "skin-to-skin contact", "early breastfeeding", "newborn", "physiological benefits" and "psychological benefits". Articles published between 2010 and 2024 were selected, prioritizing systematic reviews, clinical trials, and observational studies that addressed the impact of SSC and early breastfeeding on newborn development. **Results:** The results demonstrate that skin-to-skin contact provides significant benefits, such as regulating body temperature, increasing emotional bonding, and reducing neonatal stress. SSC can reduce newborn pain during invasive procedures and improve adaptability to the extrauterine environment. Early breastfeeding, in turn, is associated with a lower neonatal mortality rate and better long-term health, in addition to strengthening the newborn's immune system. In addition, breastfeeding is related to a reduced incidence of postpartum depression, promoting the mother's psychological well-being. **Conclusion:** The literature review shows that skin-to-skin contact and early breastfeeding are fundamental practices in the management of newborns, bringing physiological and psychological benefits that last throughout life. Interventions that promote these practices should be encouraged in maternity wards, aiming not only at the immediate health of the newborn, but also at building emotional bonds and promoting maternal well-being. It is essential that health professionals be trained to guide mothers on the importance of these practices, ensuring that they are integrated into neonatal care.

Keywords: Newborn. Breastfeeding; Early Neonatal Mortality

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