



How Kibera South Health Centre Improved Neonatal Healthcare with Kangaroo Mother Care for Pre-Term Babies and Overcame Shortage of Incubators

County:	Nairobi County
Sector	Health Sub- Sector: Neonatal Health
Keywords:	Kangaroo Mother Care, Incubators.
Target Audience:	County Governments departments of health; Governors; hospital administrators
Author(s) and Contacts:	Asha Ibrahim (0753-555-355) and Roselyne Njoroge (0719-668-760)
Institutions(s):	JKUAT School of Health Sciences; Kibera South Health Centre, Council Of Governors/Maarifa Centre
Resource Person(s) and Contacts:	Kibera South Health Centre Maternity Ward Staff: Masetu, Lonah (Lm46@Gmail.Com , Phone Number: 0726245161), (Kiberasouthhealthfacility@Gmail.Com)

CONTEXT AND CHALLENGE

Kibera south health facility is located in Kibera sub-county, one of the regions in Nairobi County with very dense population. The facility serves around 2000 clients at any one month. The range of services offered include maternal and child health care, maternity and new-born services. The facility has a 24-hour maternity ward, which delivers 80 – 100 children per month. Most of the women who come to deliver at the facility have been referred by community health volunteers, who visit people at home to help raise awareness about health matters, as well as the services that are available in the area. However, over the course of providing services, the facility faced challenges in neonatal care, which were attributed to lack of adequate facilities. The facility did not have incubators and all pre-term babies and others in distress who needed incubator care were referred to Kenyatta National Hospital. This arrangement was inconvenient to the mothers in both time and costs associated with caring for their infant in the referral hospital. In addition, Kenyatta National Hospital was overburdened in the neonatal care unit and needed to decongest. There was need to reduce the number of patients seeking maternal care in the hospital by enhancing activities in the county level is necessitated.

RESPONSE AND ACTIONS

In order to solve the above mentioned challenges, the health facility introduced Kangaroo Mother Care in March 2018, in collaboration with Save the Children NGO. The concept behind Kangaroo mother care is quite similar to the kangaroo animal pouching its preterm babies to mature. The technique requires the mother to carry the preterm baby up close to her chest; skin-to-skin, the mother should ensure the baby is breathing well. Then the baby is wrapped in that comfortable position to the mother's body. The baby is able to get direct warmth from the mother just like it's still in the uterus for its growth. The preterm baby gradually gains weight as the technique is administered. To introduce kangaroo mother care, Kibera South Health Centre took the following actions:

- a) Save the children introduced their proposal on Kangaroo mother care to the facility administration. The administration accepted their proposal to set up the unit as it would help improve the care of premature newborns.
- b) Nurses at the facility were trained at Kenyatta National Hospital on how Kangaroo mother care technique works.
- c) Save the children then identified a room for Kangaroo mother care near the maternity ward, which later was named Kangaroo mother care ward. They equipped the room with beds, clothes for wrapping the babies, heaters and other necessary equipment. They carried out an internal audit to ascertain all that they required was available to make the mothers and babies comfortable.
- d) Nurses conduct health education to all clients' and pregnant mothers on KMC every Monday and Friday at clinic. Promotion of KMC in the neighbouring community is also done by CHWs
- e) Mothers who give birth to preterm babies are educated on Kangaroo mother care practice. Those who are willing to practice the technique are admitted at the kangaroo mother care ward hence reducing the number of referrals made to KNH.
- f) Upon discharge from the health centre when the child attains the right weight, follow-up visits are made by the CHWs at home to check on the baby's progress and give mother advice.

OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

The adoption of Kangaroo mother care has led to reduced number of preterm babies' being referred to KNH from Kibera South Health Centre. Since its introduction, only four referrals have been made to KNH.

- Mothers have embraced Kangaroo mother care technique. The facility so far has successfully managed to practice out the technique on 60 preterm babies who have reported to thrive.
- Since Kangaroo mother care is a one on one experience there are minimal chances of the baby getting any infections from other babies. Babies in shared incubators are likely to get infections from each other, which leads to further complications.
- Social benefit of Kangaroo mother care is that mothers spent less time in the hospitals since Kangaroo mother care takes a maximum of 1 week. The mothers are released and go back to the facility for follow-ups (4 visits). The mother can comfortably go back to work and other caregivers can carry out the practice.

LESSONS LEARNT

- Preterm babies can be managed comfortably through the Kangaroo mother care. However, Kangaroo mother care generates no revenue to the facility since clients do not pay any fee for the services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Other maternity hospitals in different counties should embrace Kangaroo Mother Care since it is cheaper than purchasing incubators and it is readily available. It also has many benefits for both mother and baby and very little costs.