



INK
International Network in Kangaroo Mother Care



WHO Collaborating Center
for Maternal and Child Health
Trieste Italy

Save the date

First announcement

11th Workshop and Congress of the International Network on Kangaroo Mother Care

Kangaroo Mother Care: 20 years later

Trieste, Italy, 14-17 November 2016

Background

Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) was developed in the mid-70s in Colombia to make up for the inadequacy of incubators in the management of preterm infants. It was soon shown to be better than an incubator because, in addition to maintaining the temperature of the newborn, it offers a close skin to skin contact with the mother, fostering cardiorespiratory stability, breastfeeding, neuromotor stimulation and emotional bond, as well as protecting against serious infections. Moreover, in most low-income countries and except for some tertiary care hospitals with neonatal intensive care units, to acquire, manage and maintain an incubator is difficult and expensive, with the result that the so-called conventional treatments are often of low quality, while it is easier and cheaper to set up a good quality KMC unit. For all these reasons, KMC has spread, slowly at first and then more rapidly when research results that proved its safety and efficacy were made available, all around the world, both in low and high-income countries.

Among the first groups that carried out research on KMC there was the WHO Collaborating Centre for Maternal and Child Health based at IRCCS Burlo Garofolo in Trieste, Italy (WHO/CC), initially as part of a development project in Mozambique, then with a multicentre study in Ethiopia, Mexico, Brazil, India and Indonesia. At completion of the study, the WHO/CC organized in 1996 in Trieste the First Workshop and Congress on KMC, at the end of which the International Network on KMC (INK) was created. That first meeting was attended by 36 researchers from a dozen countries. It was a small but important event because a) it was decided to spread KMC by organizing similar conferences every two years, and b) the WHO representative who attended the meeting asked the WHO/CC to develop international guidelines. The WHO manual was published in 2003.¹ It has since been disseminated in thousands of copies in dozens of languages, helping to train health workers establish KMC units in thousands of hospitals around the world. Meanwhile, research made tremendous progress and KMC is currently listed among effective interventions to reduce neonatal mortality (about 4 million deaths per year) globally, as recognized not only by WHO,² but

¹ World Health Organization. Kangaroo mother care: a practical guide. WHO, Geneva, 2003
<http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/42587/1/9241590351.pdf>

² World Health Organization. WHO recommendations on interventions to improve preterm birth outcomes. WHO, Geneva, 2015 http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/183037/1/9789241508988_eng.pdf?ua=1

by governmental and non-governmental international and national organizations, and by prestigious medical journals such as the Lancet.³

Meanwhile, since 1996 INK has kept organising workshops and congresses every two years in various countries, with a participation that increased to about 100 participants at the 2nd Congress and reached 300 at the 10th. At that last congress, held in Kigali, Rwanda, in November 2014, it was proposed that the event of the 20th anniversary of INK be held in Trieste, Italy, where the first meeting on KMC was convened in 1996.

Kangaroo Mother Care: 20 years later

The WHO Collaborating Centre on Maternal and Child Health, based at the Institute for Maternal and Child Health “IRCCS Burlo Garofolo” in Trieste, will organise the event, in collaboration with an INK Scientific Committee.

The dates were chosen in such a way that the closing day will coincide with the World Prematurity Day, celebrated every year on November 17. The event will include:

- **A workshop on 14 and 15 November**, for about 50 participants representing active KMC research and development projects and programmes in as many countries as possible. The objective is to present, discuss in detail and share, experiences that will hopefully lead to improved implementation in terms of both coverage and quality, using an equity lens.
- **A congress on 16 and 17 November**, which we expect will be attended by about 300 participants. The Scientific Committee will identify a limited number of themes (4-6) and will invite speakers and discussants for keynote and other presentations for each theme. There will also be a call for posters and, among the accepted ones, the Scientific Committee will select some for oral presentation.

The event will not be sponsored, except perhaps for limited local sponsorship, to avoid any conflict of interests. Speakers and participants, therefore, will have to meet the cost of their participation (travel, accommodation, daily allowance), or search for institutions, foundations or organizations that will accept to fund their attendance to the event. The organisers hope to succeed in securing support from local sponsors so that participants will not be charged for their attendance. However, should the search for local sponsors fail, it may be necessary to ask participants to contribute a small amount of money (e.g. 100 € for 4 days, 50 € for 2 days) to pay for buffet lunches, coffee breaks and local transport.

INK asks interested people, institutions and organizations to save the date and inform the secretariat (alessandra.knowles@burlo.trieste.it, adriano.cattaneo@gmail.com) of their intention to participate. Suggestions for themes to be included in the preliminary programme (expected to be available early in 2016) and for keynote and other speakers are welcome. WHO and UNICEF are currently being contacted for support and participation.



Adriano Cattaneo
(on behalf of the Scientific Committee)



Marzia Lazzerini
(on behalf of the WHO/CC Trieste)

Trieste, 10 January 2016

³ Bhutta ZA et al. Can available interventions end preventable deaths in mothers, newborn babies, and stillbirths, and at what cost? Lancet 2014;384:347-70