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# Is parental attitude related to the amount of time devoted to skin-to-skin contact with their preterm baby?

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## Abstract

Preterm babies have an increased risk of long-term health problems and delayed neurological development, which can be reduced by skin-to-skin contact (SSC). Nevertheless, some parents spend limited time in SSC. To better understand why, we investigated if parents' own attitudes to and experience with touch are related to the time spent with SSC.

81 parents of preterm babies registered the time spent in SSC and holding their baby daily during one week, and answered a questionnaire about the experience with and attitudes to touch (TEAQ). Additionally, parents assessed the pleasantness of CT-targeted stroking and faster stroking shown on video.

Parents spent between 4 minutes to 8,5 hours per day with SSC. Parents with higher education and parents with more positive experiences and attitudes to physical touch with friends and family spent more time in SSC. Parents with more positive attitudes to self-care (i.e. using body lotions) spent more time holding their baby. Neither any of the other scales or affective touch awareness were related to SSC or holding.

Although some of parents' attitudes to and experiences with touch are associated with the amount of SSC and holding they provide, factors other than attitudes may be more important. Increasing knowledge about the benefits of SSC, particularly among parents with lower educational levels, seems to be essential.

**Keywords:** Affective touch, c tactile, parental touch, parents attitudes, skin to skin contact, TEAQ, preterm

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