



Infant massage

1. Underdown A et al 2006 Massage intervention for promoting mental and physical health in infants aged under six months Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews Issue 4. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD005038

Infant massage is thought to reduce infant stress and promote positive parent-infant interaction. The aim of this review was to assess the effectiveness of infant massage in promoting infant physical and mental health in population samples. The results of nine studies providing primary data suggest that infant massage has no effect on growth, but provides some evidence suggestive of improved mother-infant interaction, sleep and relaxation, reduced crying and a beneficial impact on a number of hormones controlling stress. The results of nine studies suggest that infant massage has no effect on growth, but provides some evidence suggestive of improved mother-infant interaction, improved sleep and relaxation, reduced crying and a beneficial impact on a number of physiological processes. There is no evidence of any impact on infant attachment, temperament, psychomotor or mental development.

2. Lahat S et al 2007 Energy expenditure in growing preterm infants receiving massage therapy J Am Coll Nutr 26 (4): 359-9

This study aimed to show that the efficacy of metabolic mechanism in healthy neonates is improved by use of massage and that energy expenditure is reduced. It was a prospective, randomised, cross over design study conducted in 10 healthy, appropriate weight for age, gavage-fed preterm infants. Each infant was studied twice after a period of 5 days either with or without massage therapy. During the massage period, massage therapy was given for fifteen minutes each day at three hourly intervals throughout the morning. Metabolic measurements were taken using the Deltatrac II Metabolic cart. The study found that energy expenditure was significantly lower in the infants after 5 days with massage than in those without. The study concludes that energy expenditure is

significantly reduced by use of infant massage and that the decrease in energy expenditure may be at least partly responsible for enhanced growth thought to be caused by massage therapy in a number of earlier studies.

3 Lee KK 2006 The effects of infant massage on weight, height, And mother-infant interaction Taehan Kanho Hakhoe Chi 36 (8): 1331-9

This study examines the effects of massage, auditory stimulation and eye to eye contact on weight, height and mother-infant interactions within a group of term neonates at age 4 weeks. It used an experimental group who participated in a health district massage programme for 4 weeks and a control group who did not. Measurements were taken at two points during the trial and video recordings were made of mother-infant interactions. Although after 4 weeks there was no difference in weight and height, significant differences were apparent in terms of mother-infant interactions. The overall conclusion of the study was that infant massage significantly affects and facilitates mother-infant bonding and interaction

4 Field T et al 2006 Newborns of depressed mothers who received moderate versus light pressure massage during pregnancy Infant Behav Dev 29 (1): 54-8

This study compared the behaviours of 64 neonates whose mothers had received moderate pressure versus light pressure massage during pregnancy. The Brazelton Neonatal Behaviour Assessment Scale was used to compare behaviours over 15 minute periods. Those neonates whose mothers had received moderate pressure massage spent more of the observation time smiling and vocalising and received better scores on orientation, motor, excitability and depression clusters of the Brazelton scale than the neonates of those whose mothers had received light pressure massage.

5 O'Higgins M et al 2007 Postnatal depression and mother and infant outcomes after infant massage, Journal of Affective Disorders, 2007 109(1-2):189-92

A pilot study indicated that attending baby massage improved maternal depression and mother–infant interactions. This study further investigates any benefits of baby massage for mothers with postnatal depression and their infants. Mothers scoring 13 on the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression

Scale (EPDS) at 4 weeks postpartum were randomly assigned to attend baby massage classes (n = 31) or a support group (n = 31). Thirty four non-depressed mothers also completed the study. Both intervention groups showed reductions in depression scores across the study period, but the massage group did better on some indices, with more of the massage than support group mothers showing a clinical reduction in EPDS scores. Mothers in the non-depressed group attended appointments at the same time points but did not attend any interventions. Mothers with postnatal depression who attended infant massage classes or support group sessions both showed a marked improvement in depression scores, but both groups still scored significantly above the non-depressed controls at one year.