

## EFFECT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTION ON THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATUS OF PREMATURE INFANTS AFTER DISCHARGE FROM THE HOSPITAL

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**Aims:** To examine the effect of psychological intervention 18 months after discharge from the hospital on the parental emotional status, the parent-infant relationship, the behavioral and developmental status of premature infants.

**Methods:** Randomized, controlled trial. Infants born between 28 and 35 weeks of gestation. 33 infants were randomly assigned to the intervention group (INT) and 32 to follow-up only (C). Intervention : The INT group received bimonthly home visits until 4 months of corrected age and, then on, monthly visits at day care center until 18 months of corrected age.

**Outcomes:** Parent-infant relationship (PSI), post-traumatic stress (perinatal PTSD), behavioral status (Symptom Check List), cognitive development (Brunet-Lézine test).

**Results:** The mothers reported PSI scores at 3 months and at 18 months of age were respectively  $91.9 \pm 16.4$  and  $93.4 \pm 14.1$  in C group versus  $94.2 \pm 11.1$  ( $p=0.170$ ) and  $76.9 \pm 7.1$  ( $p=0.001$ ) in the INT group. For mothers, perinatal PTSD at discharge and at 18 months of age were respectively  $4.9 \pm 3.7$  and  $3.8 \pm 2.5$  in the C group versus  $5.6 \pm 3.0$  ( $p=0.264$ ) and  $2.0 \pm 1.7$  ( $p=0.007$ ) in the INT group. For fathers, results were  $1.7 \pm 1.6$  in the C group at 3 months versus  $0.8 \pm 1.0$  ( $p=0.068$ ) in the INT group.

Symptom check list scores were significantly lower at 18<sup>th</sup> months of age ( $p=0.001$ ) and cognitive development scores were significantly higher at 9<sup>th</sup> month of age ( $p=0.047$ ) and at 18 months of age ( $p=0.026$ ) in the INT group.