UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

VESTRE VIKEN

Duration of skin-to-skin contact depends on gestational age, relationship and education

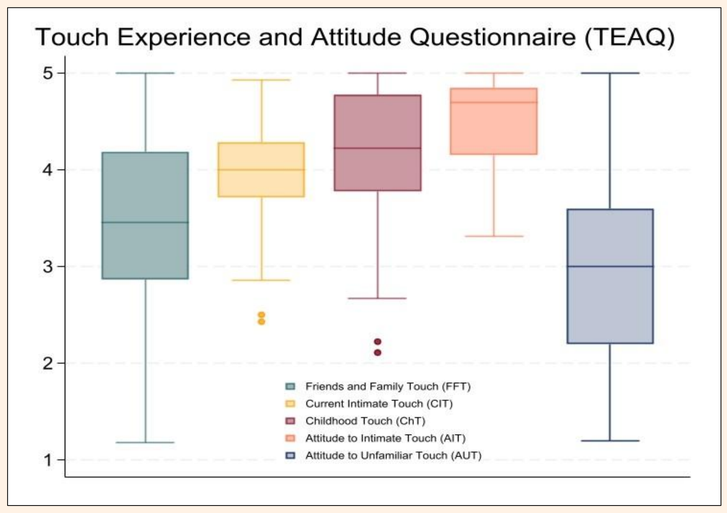
Hilde Jacobsen, Bente Silnes Tandberg, Nina Kynø & Uta Sailer

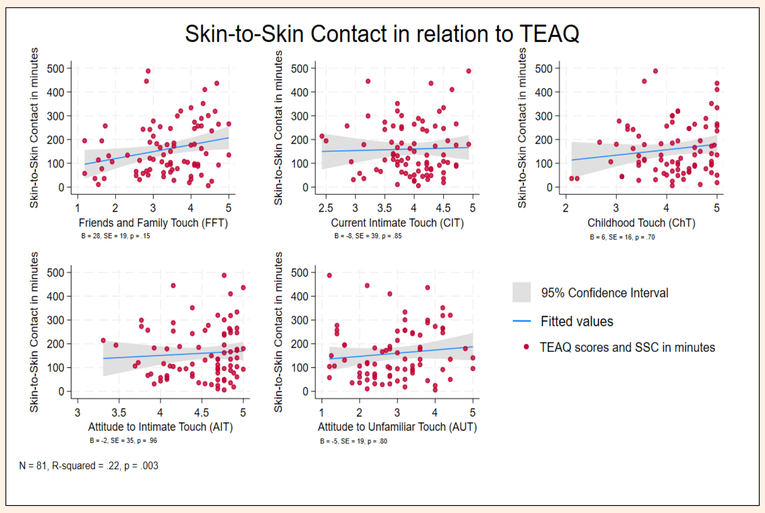
E-mail: hildkja@uio.no

Background: Skin-to-skin contact (SSC) is beneficial for preterm infants' health and development. Nevertheless, some parents spend limited time in SSC. To understand why, we investigated whether parents' own attitudes to and experience of touch are related to the time spent in SSC or holding (holding the infant with clothes/blankets on or changing diapers).

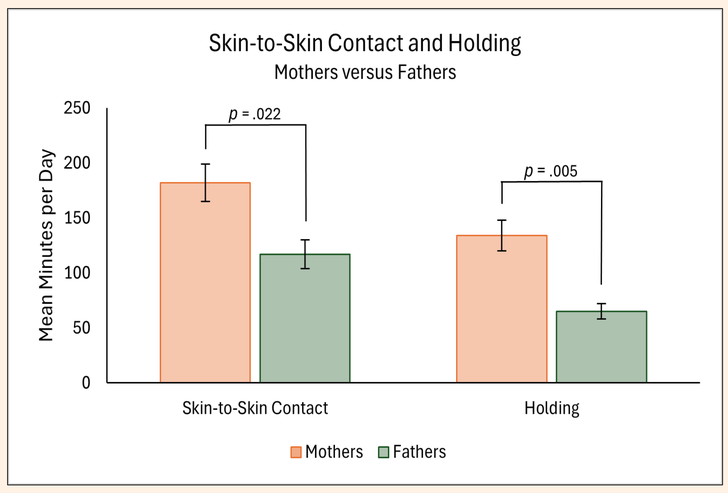
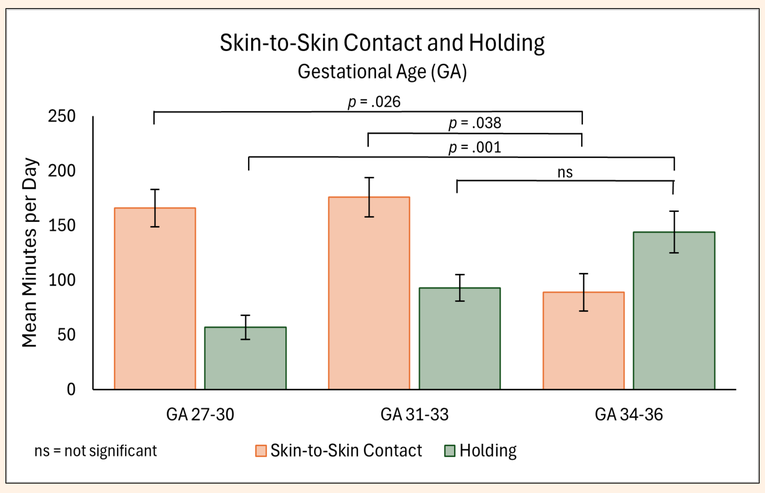
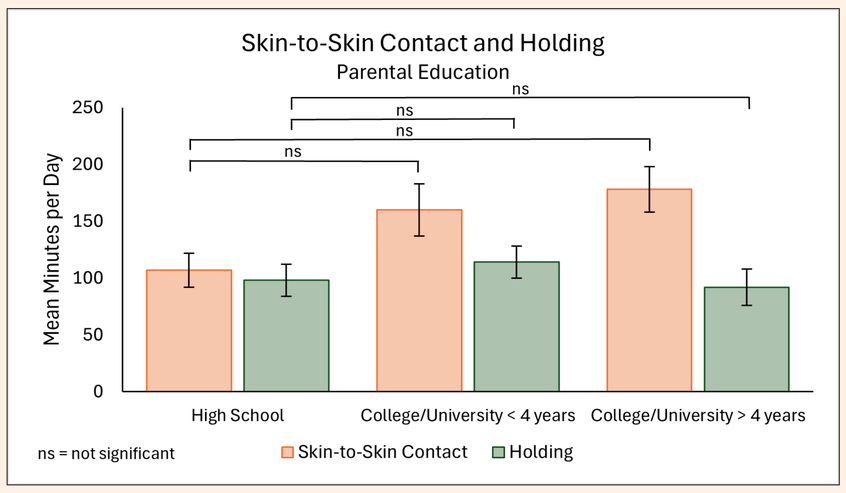
Method:

- Touch Experience and Attitude Questionnaire (TEAQ) (Trotter et al. 2018) (N=81)
- Time SSC and holding the preterm infant recorded daily for one week (N=110)





Conclusion: Parental attitudes to touch are not associated with the duration of SSC or holding preterm infants. Interventions beyond attitudes may be more effective in increasing SSC time. Younger preterm infants, who particularly benefit from SSC, received more of this care. This may be due to practical concerns (ease of access, clothing, less medical equipment), more intensive guidance from the nurses or additional factors that warrant further study.

Results:

- Infants' SSC time varied from 10 min to 12 hr 25 min per day (*M* = 4 hr 13 min)
- Parents' SSC time varied from 10 min to 11 hr 15 min per day (*M* = 2 hr 31 min)
- Mothers provided 54 min more SSC per day (p = .022) than fathers
- Infants born at gestational age (GA) 27-30 received 1 hr 10 min (p = .026) more SSC per day than those born at GA 34-36
- Infants born at GA 31-33 received 63 min (p = .038) more SSC per day than those born at GA 34-36
- Parents with the highest level of education provided 1 hr 11 min more SSC per day than those with the lowest level of education
- Parents of twins provided 1 hr more SSC per day than parents of singletons
- None of the TEAQ scales were related to SSC or holding