

A conversation with Camila Caycedo, February 18, 2020

Participants

- Camila Caycedo – Administrative Director, Kangaroo Foundation
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Note: These notes were compiled by GiveWell and give an overview of the major points made by Ms. Caycedo.

Summary

GiveWell spoke with Ms. Caycedo of the Kangaroo Foundation to learn about its work to promote Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC). Conversation topics included an overview of the Kangaroo Foundation's work, the training it provides to teams around the world, other work that the foundation does, and what it would do with additional funding.

Overview of the Kangaroo Foundation's work

The Kangaroo Foundation, based in Colombia, has worked for over 25 years on the evaluation and promotion of KMC. The foundation conducts research on KMC, provides training on the implementation of KMC for teams from Colombia and around the world, and certifies hospitals that are implementing quality KMC according to the KMC technical guidelines of the Ministry of Health of Colombia so that those facilities can train other teams.

Providing training and establishing excellence centers

Because the KMC method was developed in Colombia, the country has a large network of KMC programs. There are over 53 KMC programs in Colombia, with approximately 15 in Bogota alone. Ninety percent of premature babies born in Bogota have access to KMC. When a new KMC program is going to be established in Colombia or any other country, a team composed of a pediatrician, a nurse, and a psychologist comes to Bogota for a 15-day training program with the Kangaroo Foundation, then returns to its city to implement KMC in its own facility.

Before a team can begin training others, the Kangaroo Foundation must travel to the country and evaluate the hospital's implementation of the KMC method. Hospitals that are providing an excellent standard of care are certified as excellence centers and may then begin training other teams.

The Kangaroo Foundation would like for a similar model to be implemented in every country around the world, with one teaching hospital in each country acting as an "excellence center." Each excellence center would train other teams from that country on the implementation of KMC, creating a country-wide KMC network. This model allows for more efficient scale-up of KMC than having many individual teams from a single country come to Colombia to receive training. The foundation sees this

as the best way to eventually provide universal access to KMC for premature and low birth weight babies.

Targeting potential excellence centers

When looking for hospitals that might eventually become excellence centers, the Kangaroo Foundation generally looks for teaching hospitals where staff are already familiar with providing training to others. It is important for the hospital to have the financial and staff capacity to provide KMC training to other facilities, and it is best if the hospital is located in a principal city. Additionally, the foundation considers whether a KMC program is needed in the city where the hospital is located (for instance, it will consider the rate of premature births in the area).

Success rate of the Kangaroo Foundation's training

The Kangaroo Foundation has trained more than 70 teams from more than 30 countries. Eighty percent of the teams that the Kangaroo Foundation has trained have been able to successfully implement KMC in their home hospital (though not all of these have become excellence centers).

It is more difficult to successfully implement KMC in some areas than others. In Colombia, the Kangaroo Foundation works with the Ministry of Health and has helped to establish national guidelines for KMC. These guidelines have created better conditions for implementing KMC in Colombia. Therefore, teams hoping to implement KMC in Colombia are working from a different starting point than many other teams around the world. The Kangaroo Foundation works to adapt its training to the conditions of other countries, but it can be challenging for some teams to successfully implement recommendations if the conditions in their country are suboptimal. For example, the Kangaroo Foundation has trained many teams from Africa, and some of these teams have had difficulty implementing KMC in their countries due to lack of access to clean water or reliable energy.

Other work

Providing information to teams that have not taken the training

The KMC method involves numerous details related to the positioning of the baby, breastfeeding, and infrastructure, and it is difficult for a facility to implement all of these details successfully without observing and receiving training from a working KMC program. For this reason, the Kangaroo Foundation prefers that teams implementing KMC participate in the 15-day training program. However, the foundation will provide information to teams that have not gone through its training.

The Kangaroo Foundation receives and answers numerous questions related to the proper infrastructure and equipment needed to implement KMC (such as the kinds of chairs that are needed and the kind of wraps that should be used to secure a baby against a mother's chest). The Kangaroo Foundation also helps teams to develop

budgets for needed infrastructure, though the funding for the infrastructure must come from the team's hospital.

Use of additional funding

Over the past few years, the Kangaroo Foundation has executed budgets of hundreds of thousands of dollars, with its most significant funding being a \$1,000,000 grant it received for a 2012-2014 project from Grand Challenges Canada's "Saving Brains" program.

Training and excellence centers

With additional funds, the Kangaroo Foundation would continue working toward its goal of establishing excellence centers in every country. Its first priority would be providing training to four teams from Bhutan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Pakistan. The Kangaroo Foundation has received partial funding to cover training for these teams from the Colombian Presidential Agency of International Cooperation. Typically, hospitals pay for the training provided to their teams, but in some cases where countries are unable to afford to send a team, the Kangaroo Foundation will seek out funding. The Kangaroo Foundation frequently receives requests to lead trainings for new teams, so more funding will continue to be needed.

There is also a need for funding to bring the Kangaroo Foundation to hospitals for accreditation for some teams that have completed the training in Colombia. For example, about seven teams from different hospitals in Ecuador received the training approximately four years ago, but there has not yet been funding to send the Kangaroo Foundation to Ecuador to evaluate the quality of KMC implementation in the hospitals and potentially certify an excellence center.

Research

The Kangaroo Foundation would also be interested in putting additional funding toward research projects, such as a cost-effectiveness evaluation of a KMC program in Colombia. This evaluation would seek to determine the amount of resources needed to take care of a premature and/or low birth weight baby attending a KMC program during their first year of life.

The foundation would also like to develop an Observatory of the Premature Infant (OPI), the first of its kind, to create and monitor a cloud-based low birth weight infant database, centralizing data from the more than 50 KMC programs in Colombia. Such a database would allow for improved analysis and research related to KMC, including geographic data (e.g. whether clinics are rural or urban, whether isolated or easy-access, etc.), ethnic data, and socio-economic data. The OPI will also include a partnership with data visualization experts at Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá to develop tools to better understand and monitor the data.

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