

## Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0300-9572(18)30140-0  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resuscitation.2018.03.030>  
Reference: RESUS 7548

To appear in: *Resuscitation*

Received date: 11-11-2017  
Revised date: 19-3-2018  
Accepted date: 22-3-2018

Please cite this article as: Dekker Janneke, Hooper Stuart B, Martherus Tessa, Cramer Sophie JE, van Geloven Nan, Pas Arjan Bte. Repetitive versus standard tactile stimulation of preterm infants at birth – A randomized controlled trial. *Resuscitation* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resuscitation.2018.03.030>

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## Repetitive versus standard tactile stimulation of preterm infants at birth – a randomized controlled trial

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*Short title:* Tactile stimulation of preterm infants at birth

*Word count:* 2987 words

*Word count abstract:* 250 words

### ABSTRACT

**Aim** To evaluate the direct effect of repetitive tactile stimulation on breathing effort of preterm infants at birth.

**Methods** This randomized controlled trial compared the effect of repetitive stimulation on respiratory effort during the first 4 minutes after birth with standard stimulation based on clinical indication in preterm infants with a gestational age of 27-32 weeks. All details of the stimulation performed were noted. The main study parameter measured was respiratory minute volume, other study parameters assessed measures of respiratory effort; tidal volumes, rate of rise to maximum tidal volumes, percentage of recruitment breaths, and oxygenation of the infant.

**Results** There was no significant difference in respiratory minute volume in the repetitive stimulation group when compared to the standard group. Oxygen saturation was significantly higher ( $87.6 \pm 3.3\%$  vs  $81.7 \pm 8.7\%$ ,  $p=0.01$ ) while the amount of  $\text{FiO}_2$  given during transport to the NICU was lower ( $28.2$  ( $22.8 - 35.0$ )% vs  $33.6$  ( $29.4 - 44.1$ )%,  $p=0.04$ ). There was no significant difference in

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