

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION PROGRAM AS A PRENATAL FACTOR IN THE QUIET ALERT STATE IN NORMAL NEWBORNS

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Newborns of mothers practicing the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program showed increased quiet alertness.—EDITORS

The purpose of this experiment was to evaluate the effect of practice of the Transcendental Meditation (TM) and TM-Sidhi program by pregnant mothers on the subsequent frequency and duration of Quiet Alert periods in their newborn infants. Quiet Alert periods are characterized by an alert state in which the infant's eyes are bright, and the infant is visibly content and free from distress. Previous research has suggested that during the Quiet Alert state, infants are most receptive to learning.

An experimental group of 15 neonates aged 0–1 month, born to mothers practicing the TM and TM-Sidhi program, were matched with a control group of 15 neonates of non-meditating mothers on 25 demographic variables related to the occurrence of this behavioral state (including life-style habits of the mother, and the gender, birth-order, and diet of the newborns). Parents were trained in classification of behavioral states and then they observed their infants two or three days per week for four weeks. All infants were within the normal range on the Bayley Scales for motor and cognitive development. Based on videotapes of the newborns, an impartial observer checked the accuracy of the mothers' observations and found them to be highly reliable.

The average duration of Quiet Alert periods throughout the 24-hour cycle over a one-month period (see Fig. 1)

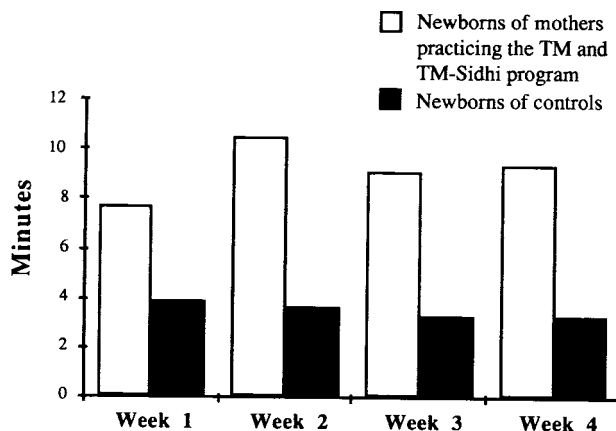


FIG. 1. AVERAGE DURATION OF QUIET ALERT STATE. Newborns of mothers practicing the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program spent longer periods in the Quiet Alert state, in which infants are visibly content, free from distress, and most receptive to learning.

was over twice as long in the experimental group (8.8 minutes) than in the control group (3.3 minutes, $p < .025$). The longest average duration of a single Quiet Alert period in the experimental group (36.5 minutes) was approximately three times as long as that of the control group (12.4 minutes, $p < .01$). Also the Quiet Alert periods of infants in the experimental group increased in both duration and in frequency during the four weeks of observation.