

## Re: Clamping baby's cord – is baby still breathing through it?

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*From:* P Harris ([patberto\\_at\\_frontiernet.net](mailto:patberto_at_frontiernet.net))

*Date:* 06/20/04

Date: 20 Jun 2004 13:33:46 -0700

Mxsmanic <[mxsmanic@hotmail.com](mailto:mxsmanic@hotmail.com)> wrote in message  
news:<[oq59d0p6pgu1cqktml4d5k3sp7m17q6k3c@4ax.com](mailto:oq59d0p6pgu1cqktml4d5k3sp7m17q6k3c@4ax.com)>...

> *P Harris writes:*

>

> > *LOL. You don't mean inconclusive, you mean "well phooey, I choose to*

> > *ignore these studies because they do not happen to support my*

> > *arguement" :–D*

>

> *No, I mean inconclusive. They fail to show cause and effect.*

> *Correlation is not causation*

Oh, one last try, not because I think you're *\*interested\** but in the cause of general public education for anyone else still foolish enough to be reading this thread...

You have a most peculiar (and completely unfulfillable in the real world) expectation about what should, or in fact CAN, constitute evidence about something.

Correlation between 2 phenomena is all that can EVER be shown. Ever, anywhere, in any study, in any field of life. It is not possible, from a philosophical standpoint even, to prove that ANYTHING truly causes ANYTHING else.

Don't believe me? Look: when you hit me on the head with a stick I feel a pain at the moment of impact and a bruise comes up at that site later on, that *\*could\** just be coincidence. You can't PROVE that the whack with the stick caused those effects. Or there are a whole bunch of various alternative explanations possible. Maybe the pain and bruise were about to occur and psychically drew you to smack the stick there, maybe some other mysterious force caused not only the pain and bruise but also put the idea in your head to hit me with the stick. It is *\*possible\**.

Of course, only a nutcase would actually argue that the whack with the stick *\*didn't\** cause the pain and bruise:–P But we only feel that way

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because it's a very consistent correlation that is explained well by theories that (in turn) have a lot more [still just correlative] evidence behind them than do the alternative theories. We have well-supported and very accurately-predictive theories that describe the forces imparted by a swung stick, well-supported and accurately-predictive theories that describe the mechanical reactions of skin and nerves to impacts buffered by various degrees of cushioning, etcetera. Whereas nobody has yet made much progress constructing accurately-predictive correlatively-supported theories about imminent pain sucking sticks towards itself, or Mysterious Forces exerting mind control, or suchlike. So as a conversational and mental convenience, we say "hitting me caused the pain and bruise". But we still haven't proven that.... it's still "only" a bunch of correlative data.

In fact you will perhaps be depressed to discover ;-) that is impossible to prove that such a thing as causation even EXISTS! We all \*assume\* that causation is real, sure, because otherwise daily life would be awful bewildering and difficult, and heck maybe there really \*is\* such a thing as causation, who knows, but we will never know for sure or be able to \*prove\* that it exists.

So, my suggestion would be, deal with it. Not by spouting sophomoric catchphrases like 'correlation doesn't prove causation', but by actually \*thinking\* it and coming to terms with the way this world works :->

- > *I mean, really... have you even READ the studies?*
- >
- > *I read the abstracts. Unless the abstracts are deliberately fraudulent,*
- > *that is sufficient to know that they have the flaws described above.*

Well, ooooooaaaaay.... but then, if "not proving causation" is The Flaw you're talking about, then why on earth would you bother reading any part of ANY study on anything, since nobody will \*ever\* be able to demonstrate anything more than correlations. I could tell you "Hey, I did a study on the effects of-" and you could interrupt me right there and reply with absolute accuracy "Ah, but you haven't proven causation there <shrug>". Save yourself a lot of effort that way, too :->

Though if that is your attitude, then you are dismissing wholesale the very concepts of science or evidence or judging the world on the basis of observable phenomena. Which I guess you can if you want but don't expect it to lead to any sort of sensible conversations with anyone.

Giving up now because I think this has been more than enough 'public service announcement' and I can see that you are merely interested in lazy\*-lawyering-in-the-support-of-an-unchallengable-belief, not THINKING,

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\*–I say "lazy" because I continue to be astonished that you have not brought up the fact that there is reason to believe that in at least \*some\* cases, very late cord clamping can indeed be harmful to the newborn by overloading the system with red blood cells whose later breakdown (in the body's attempt to achieve a more balanced state) can cause serious jaundice. I do not know how predictably this occurs, nor how often, nor anything like that, but it is probably the most rational i.e. evidence–based argument for early cord clamping that one can muster. You haven't mentioned it at all.  
Go figure. <shrug>

Pat  
due July 21 and looking forward to the opportunity to increase by one the number of people in the world who're interested in logical/critical thinking