

## **ORAL: MATERNAL CULTURAL HANDLING PRACTICES AND BELIEFS ABOUT MOTOR DEVELOPMENT OF INFANTS UP TO 18 MONTHS OF AGE**

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**Objectives:** To investigate whether mothers from an afro-descendent community in a rural area differ from mothers from an urban area about beliefs concerning the age at which developmental milestones (DM) will occur in the first 18 months of the infant's life and handling practices that these mothers perform with infants. **Method:** We interviewed 30 mothers of infants up to 18 months of age divided into two groups. The Sao Paulo Group (SPG) composed of 14 mothers (36.5±4.3 years old) living in the West Urban Zone of Sao Paulo city, SP, Brazil. The Quilombola Group (QG), with 16 mothers (28±5.1 years old) who lived in a Quilombola (afro-descendant) community called Campinho da Independência, Paraty city, RJ, Brazil. The interviews lasted an average of 30 minutes divided into: (1) Questions about the mother's understanding of DM and what were the ages she expected her baby would sit without support, stand up, walk and use a spoon for feeding. (2) The researcher showed to the mother 11 videos about handling practices with infants collected by Professor Blandine Brill from Groupe de Recherche Apprentissage et Contexte, L'École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France. For each video the mother were asked whether she would handle her baby the way it was depicted in the video, and which adequate age babies should be submitted to such practice. **Analysis** was performed by descriptive statistics. **Results:** Both groups agreed on the estimated average for the achievement of each DM. There was a greater intra-group variability among the QG mothers for expected age for sitting, standing, and using the spoon. The most common maternal handling practice for both groups was body massage in the infant. In the SPG 57% of mothers would stimulate their babies walk upright and 71% would stimulate to stay upright, while all mothers from the QG employed these body practices to stimulate their babies. **Implications:** This preliminary analysis indicates that there may be socio-cultural influences on some maternal handling practices that were inherit from African cultures.