The results of a new clinical trial published in the New England Journal of Medicine, show that immediate kangaroo mother care, which involves skin-to-skin contact with the mother and exclusive breastfeeding, started as soon as a preterm or low birthweight baby is born, dramatically improves survival.

Current World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations indicate starting kangaroo mother care only after the baby is stabilized in an incubator or warmer, which can take on average 3-7 days. This new study suggests that, when compared with the existing practice, starting kangaroo mother care immediately after birth can save up to 150,000 more lives each year.