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Side Effects of Cranial Remolding Orthoses: A Multi-Site Review

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Side Effects of Cranial Remolding Orthoses: A Multi-Site Review

Tiffany Graham, MSPO, C/LPO, and Jijia Wang, PhD

Abstract: Infants with deformational head shapes may be treated with a Cranial Remolding Orthosis (CRO). Risks of CROs include skin irritations and other minor side effects. It is important to examine the incidence of complications with CRO treatment to determine if the potential benefits outweigh the risks.

This study retrospectively examined surveys provided by both practitioners and caregivers regarding orthotic treatment side effects and wear time at four clinics in Canada. Statistical analysis including the Chi-square test and Fisher's exact tests were performed to examine how the side effects varied by treatment site and by reported orthotic wear time. Key Words: Brachycephaly, Cranial Remolding Orthosis, deformational head shape, Helmet, Plagiocephaly

(J Craniofac Surg 2022;33: 1358-1362)

Since the implementation of the "Back to Sleep" campaign by the American Academy of Pediatrics in the early 1990s, pediatricians in the United States have recommended infants sleep on their back. ¹⁻⁷ This initiative resulted in a significant decrease in the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) ³⁻⁵, however, some studies claim it also led to an up to a six-fold increase in the diagnoses of deformational head shapes, ⁶ with reports of up to 43% of newborns having cranial deformation.

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Side Effects Reporting

- 2013 (Gump et al) review of literature complications were "low or negligible"
 - malodorous perspiration, minor skin irritations, and social stigma
- 2001 (Loveday et al) side effects include: heat rash, reactions to the materials, and older infants able to remove the CROs
 - complications seen by the 29 patients in their CRO group may have been caused by <u>poorly</u> <u>manufactured or poorly fitted CROs</u>
- 2021 (Takamatsu et al) may be a link between fit issues and complications
- (personal theory): wear time is inversely correlated with complications











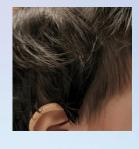




Side Effects Reporting

<u>Side Effect</u>	<u>VanWijk et al</u>
Skin irritations	96%
Augmented sweating	71%
Unpleasant Odour	76%
Difficulty cuddling infant	77%

<u>Side Effect</u>	<u>Lee et al</u>
Rashes	35.4%
Pressure sore / skin breakdown	25.6%
Itching	7.3%
2 or more adverse events	9.8%















Methods

- Retrospective review of caregiver and practitioner surveys
 - 1/30/2020 to 6/15/2021
 - 4 offices in Canada using SnugKap (now named ROKband):
 - New Westminster, BC, Burlington, ON, Calgary, AB, and Edmonton, AB
- 1 wk; every 3 week follow ups
- Stats done using SAS
 - Chi-Squared test; Fisher's Exact tests; pairwise multiple comparison using Bonferroni's method; sig at 5%

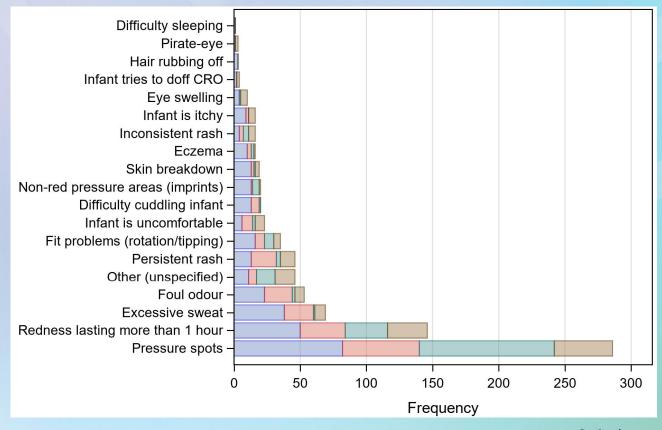






Results

- 4 offices; 453 patients
- 5,025 visits
 - Manually categorized
 - 832 incidences of side-effects
- No significant issues at 4,376 visits (87%)
 - Burlington (89.94%)*
 - Calgary (84.55%)*
 - Edmonton (85.66%)*
 - New Westminster (87.70%)*

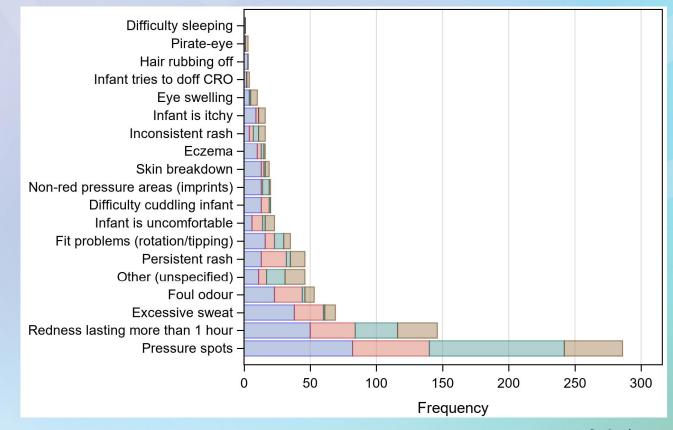






Results by Clinic

- Statistically similar:
 - difficulty cuddling infant
 - persistent rash
 - excessive sweat
 - foul odor
 - infant is itchy
 - pressure spots
 - other side effects
 - eye swelling
 - non-red pressure areas (imprints)
 - skin breakdown

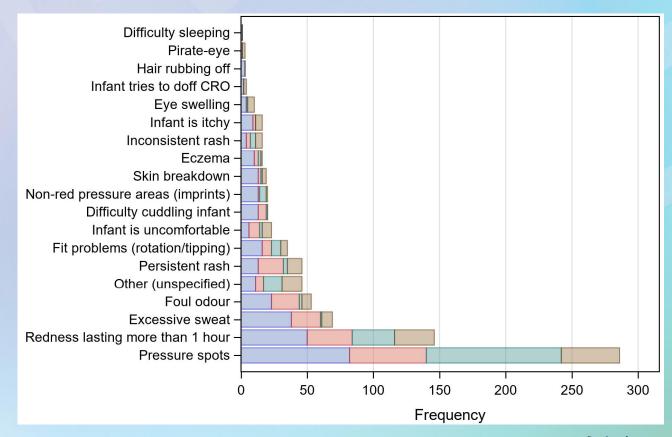






Results by Clinic

- Statistically different:
 - infant is uncomfortable*
 - fit problems (rotation/tipping)*
 - redness lasting more than 1 hour*
 - hair rubbing off*
 - infant tries to doff CRO*
 - difficulty sleeping*
 - Eczema*
 - "pirate-eye"*
 - inconsistent rash*

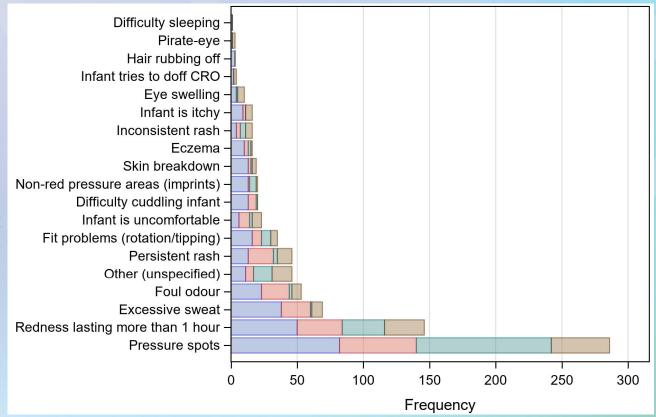






Results

- Fewer than 5 occurrences:
 - · difficulty sleeping
 - "pirate-eye"
 - hair rubbing off
 - infant tries to doff CRO
- Greater than 50 occurrences:
 - pressure spots
 - redness lasting for more than 1 hour
 - excessive sweat
 - foul odour







Results – Incidence of Multiple Side Effects

Number of Side Effects	Frequency	Percent
Survey did not report an answer	5	0.10%
No significant issues to report	4376	87.08%
1 side effect reported	503	10.01%
2 side effect reported	101	2.01%
3 side effect reported	33	0.66%
4 side effect reported	7	0.14%
Total Visits	5025	100%





Results – Incidence of Multiple Side Effects

- •35 "fit problems" (rotation/tipping)
 - 0.7% of surveys
- 3 times more likely to report multiple side effects*









Results – Wear Time Analysis of Side Effects







Discussion



Side Effect	Reported	VanWijk, et al
Skin irritations	9.84%	96%
Augmented sweating	1.32%	71%
Unpleasant Odour	1.02%	76%
Difficulty cuddling infant	0.38%	77%

Side Effect	Reported	Lee, et al
Rashes	1.19%	35.4%
Pressure sore / skin breakdown	0.36%	25.6%
Itching	0.31%	7.3%
2 or more adverse events	2.81%	9.8%





Limitations

- Retrospective evaluation of de-identified survey data
 - No average number of visits per patient
 - Side effects reporting may be artificially inflated
- Orthotist interpretation of categories
 - Ex: 'mesh imprints' = non-red pressure marks
 - Might not need adjustments
 - Pressure marks may be over-reported
 - Ex: 1/5 redness may be clinically appropriate
- Subjective side-effects
 - Ex: infant being uncomfortable or difficulty cuddling infant







Limitations

- Caregiver-reported wear time
- •1 band, 4 clinics
- Some telehealth surveys
- Climate-based side effects
 - Ex: foul odour and excessive sweat
- Reduced wear-time at end of treatment
 - Orthosis outgrown?







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