POSTER: MANUAL ACTIVE BEHAVIOUR IN EARLY INFANCY.

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Objective: To describe manual clutching behaviour in infants from 1 to 3 months old in contingent and non-contingent conditions. Method: 19 infants were divided into 3 age groups: 1-month-olds (*n*=5), 2- month-olds (*n*=7), and 3-month-olds (*n*=7). The hand's exploratory activity was inferred from clutching behaviour during four experimental conditions: Baseline 1(B1-2min no stimuli), Contingent (C - 4min where a short video was presented on a monitor every time a certain clutching pressure was reached-, Non-contingent (NC - 4min with the video presented randomly-, and Baseline 2 (B2 - 2min no stimuli). Infants sat in a baby chair and a rod made of rubber was placed in the baby's palm inducing a palmar grasp. With a built-in transducer in the rod, clutching pressure was measured and the following variables were calculated: number of clutches, mean and SD clutching pressure, clutch duration SD. Results: A ANOVA(3x4) indicated a significant interaction between age and condition for clutching pressure SD. Post hoc analyses showed that 3-month-old babies presented more variability in their clutching pressure than 2-month-olds and 1-month-olds. Differences between conditions for clutch duration and for clutch duration SD were also found. Post hoc analyses showed that clutch duration in B1 was significantly longer than for C, NC, and B2. Furthermore, NC showed more variability in clutch duration than C. ANOVA's (repeated measures) for each group revealed significant differences for number of clutches between conditions for 2-month-olds, and 3-month-olds, where 2-month-old infants clutched more during NC compared to B1 and B2, and 3-month-olds clutched more in C than in B1 and more in NC than B1 and B2. There were differences for clutch duration between conditions for 1-month-olds and 2-month-olds. Post hoc analyses indicated that clutch duration was longer in C than in NC on 1-month-olds and for 2-month-olds. Implications: The results indicate that newborns and infants clutch differently according to the environmental results of their actions.