

Benefits of Prenatal Kick Counting

Part 2: Examining Postnatal Reaching and Parent Talk

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Background

- Fetal kick counting (FKC) is used for monitoring fetal well-being during pregnancy
- Few studies have examined the impact of FKC on maternal mental health with mixed results^{1,2,3}
- Recent findings suggest FKC may improve subsequent mother-infant engagement⁴

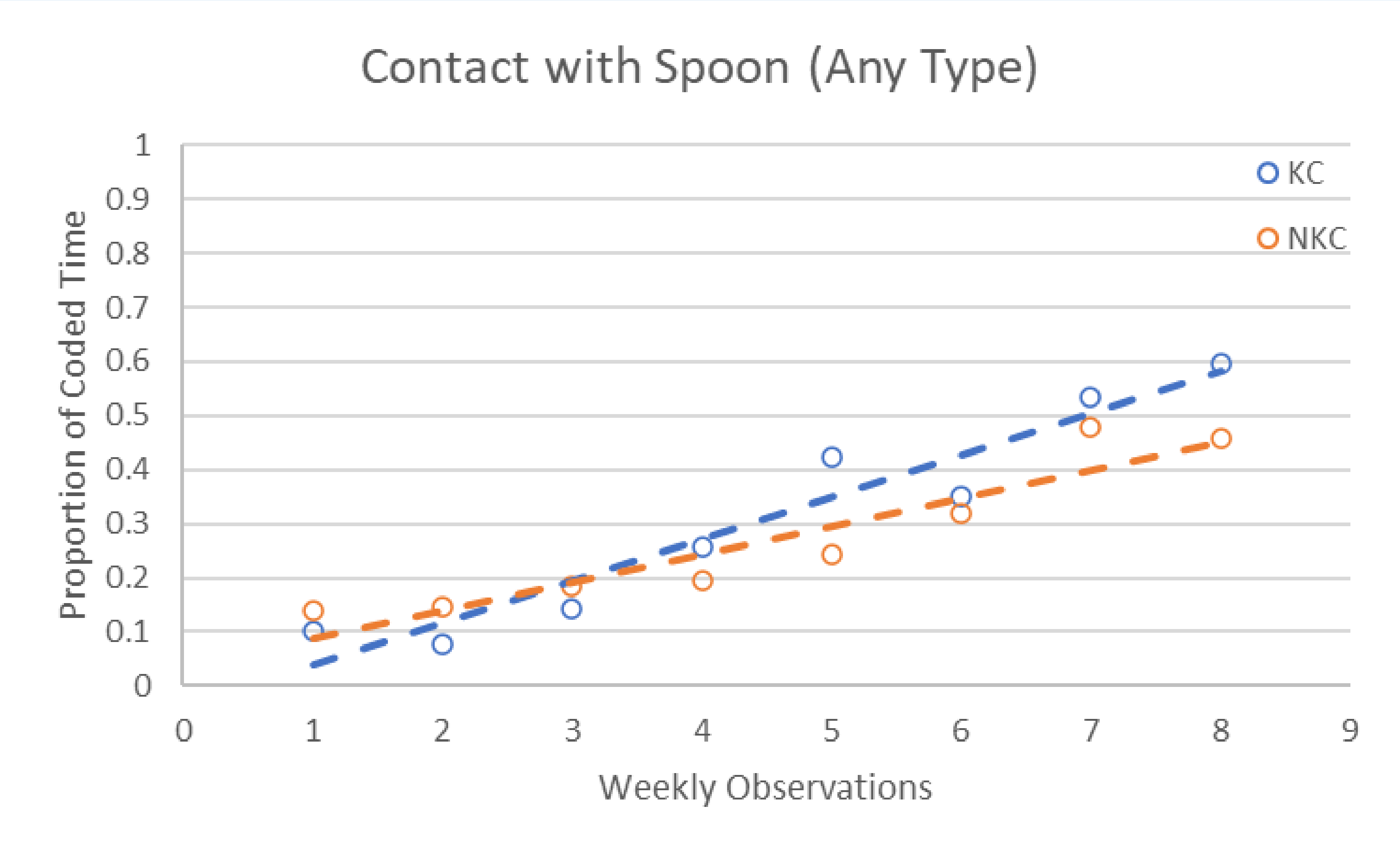
The current study examines whether engaging in FKC alters subsequent parental engagement and infant manual exploration.

Method

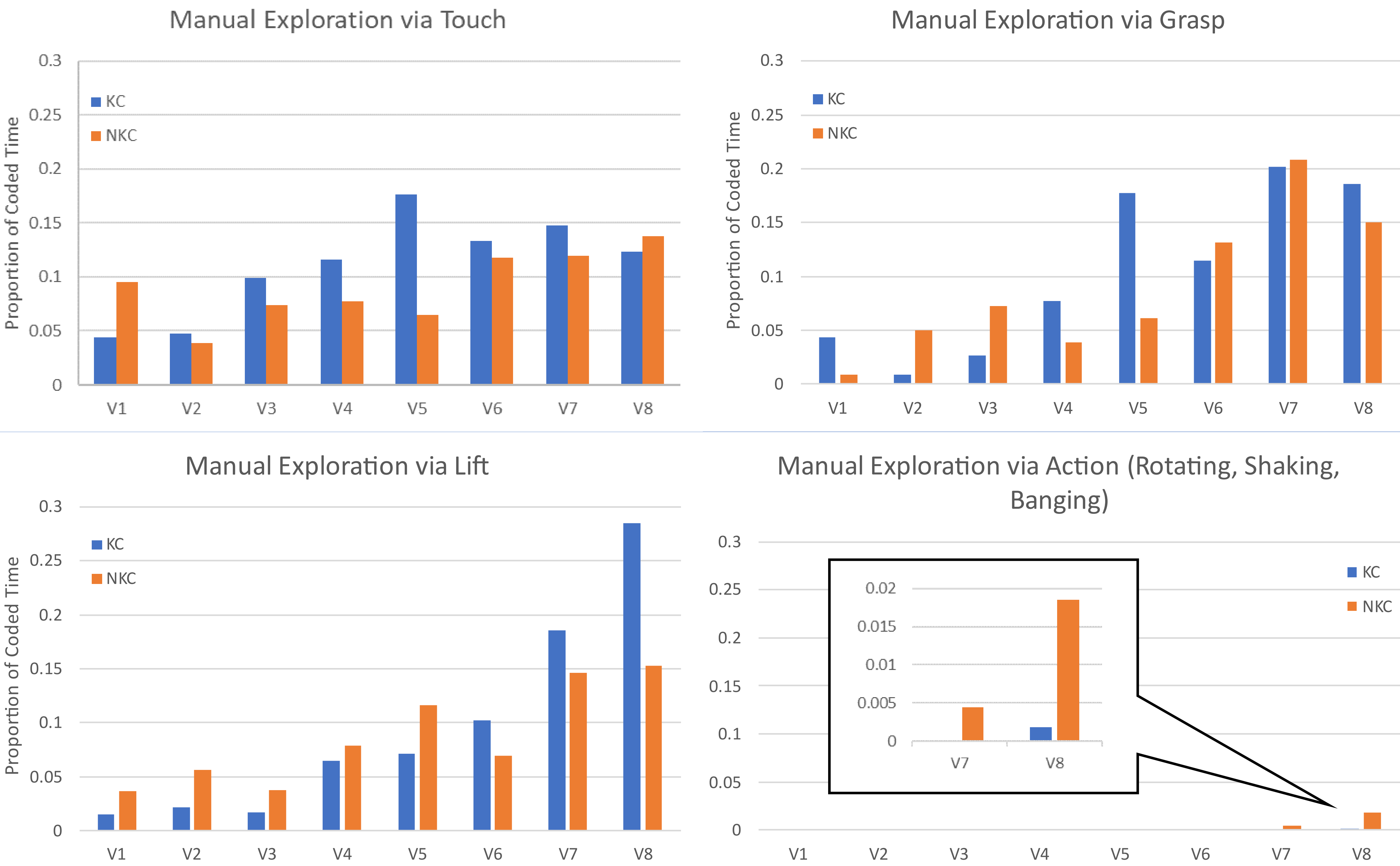
- 25 parent-child dyads participated and were matched using propensity scores
 - 13 mothers completed in fetal kick counting (KC)
 - 12 mothers did not (NKC)
- Sample Demographics Used for Propensity Score Matching
- | | KC | | NKC | |
|---------------------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| N | 13 (7 male) | | 12 (6 male) | |
| Age in Days | 158.08 | 14.18 | 155.83 | 16.03 |
| Mother Education | 5.00 | 0.68 | 4.83 | 1.07 |
| Father Education | 4.62 | 1.08 | 4.58 | 1.11 |
| Household Education | 9.62 | 1.39 | 9.42 | 1.80 |
| Income | 10.62 | 1.73 | 10.08 | 2.10 |
- Self-report measures:
 - SCL-90R for maternal signs of **depression and anxiety**
 - EMQ for child's **gross motor, fine motor, and perception-action** development
 - Mother-child interaction measures
 - Manual exploration**
 - Quantity of parent talk**



Kick counting during the third trimester did **not** increase child's manual exploration postpartum...

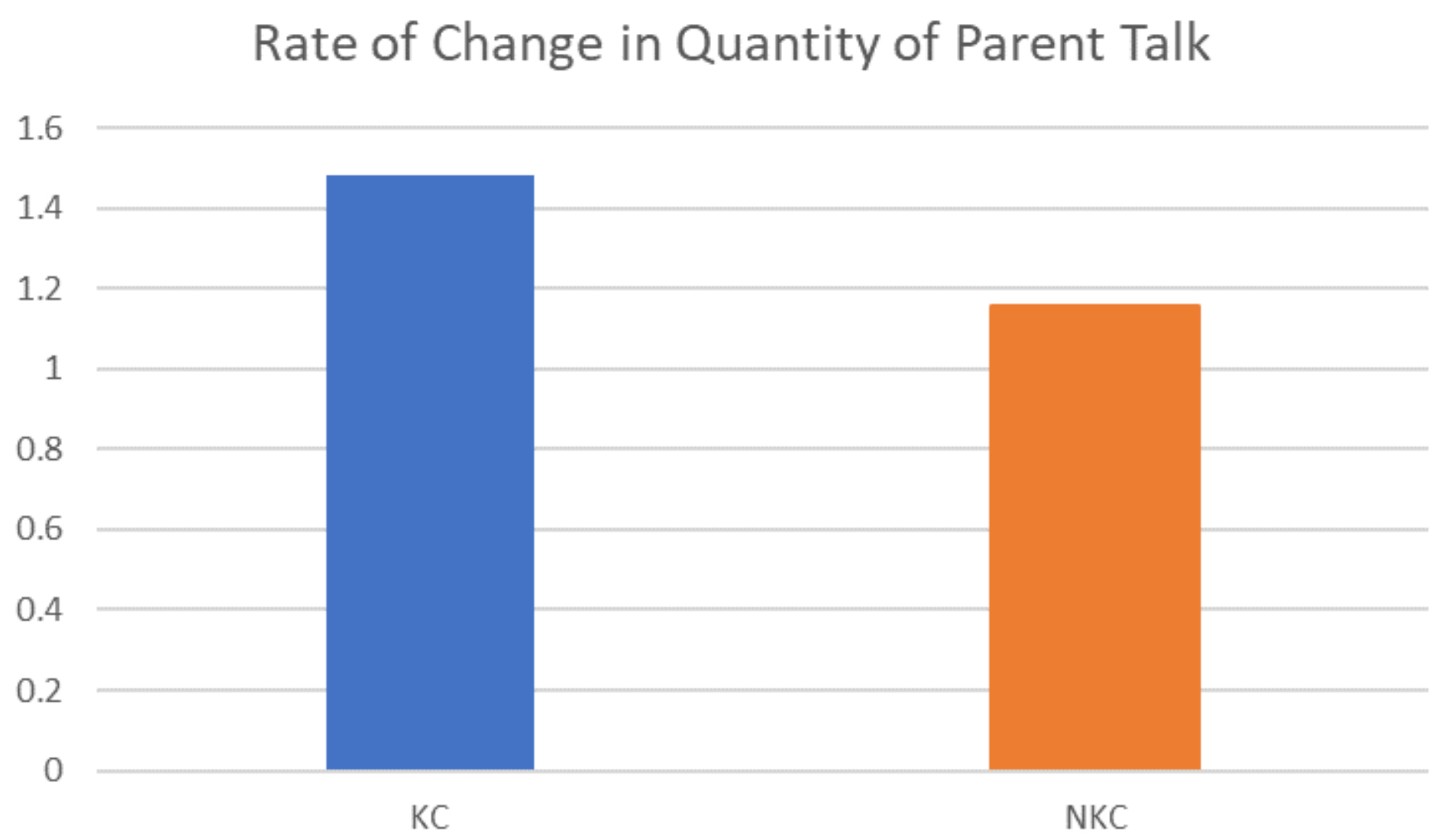


...but manual exploration strategies **did** increase in complexity over the 8-week period surrounding average grasping onset.



Results

- KC and NKC groups **did not** differ in:
 - Maternal subclinical symptoms** of depression and anxiety [$F(1,24)=0.13, p=.723$]
 - Parent-reported infant **gross motor** [$F(1,24)=0.63, p=.435$], **fine motor** [$F(1,24)=0.85, p=.365$], or **perception-action** scores [$F(1,24)=0.16, p=.690$]
- Quantity of **parent talk** [$F(1,24)=0.19, p=.668$]



Discussion

- Engaging in fetal kick counting did **not** affect the quantity of parent talk or child manual exploration.
- Fetal kick counting may not have impact on postpartum **parent or child behavior**.
- Future research is needed to examine more subtle differences such as whether FKC alters mother's awareness of their child's movement and motor capabilities postpartum.

References

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