

Although [helmet](#) therapy is widely accepted in the treatment of severe [positional plagiocephaly](#), treatment regimens, especially regarding starting age, are controversial. This study investigated the importance of starting age to optimize the management of helmet therapy.

Sixty-two infants with severe positional plagiocephaly were enrolled in this prospective longitudinal study. Twenty-four started helmet therapy before 6 months of age (group 1) and 38 were older than 6 months (group 2). Cranial diagonal measurements were taken. Resulting differences and Cranial Vault Asymmetry Index values were compared and categorized by age at initiation of therapy. The Mann-Whitney U test was used for statistical analysis. RESULTS: Duration of therapy was significantly shorter in group 1 (14 weeks) compared with group 2 (18 weeks) ($p = 0.013$), with significantly better outcomes. The Cranial Vault Asymmetry Index in group 1 was reduced to a normal mean value less than 3.5 percent. Infants in group 2 did not achieve normal values (index value, 4.5 percent) ($p = 0.021$). The relative improvement in asymmetry was significantly better in group 1 (75.3 percent) compared with group 2 (60.6 percent) ($p = 0.001$). After 4 to 11 weeks of treatment, group 1 already showed a better absolute reduction ($p < 0.001$) and a better relative reduction ($p = 0.002$). CONCLUSIONS: Optimal starting age for helmet therapy is months 5 to 6 of life, and early recognition of infants in need is essential. Delaying the onset of treatment significantly deteriorates the outcome. The still often-practiced regimen of starting helmet therapy after physiotherapy should be replaced by a combined therapy in severe cases ¹⁾.

¹⁾

Kluba S, Kraut W, Reinert S, Krimmel M. What is the optimal time to start helmet therapy in positional plagiocephaly? *Plast Reconstr Surg.* 2011 Aug;128(2):492-8. doi: 10.1097/PRS.0b013e31821b62d6. PubMed PMID: 21788840.

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