Optimising Breastfeeding Practices: A Public Health’s Perspective

HA Convention 2014
8 May 2014

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Outline

• Optimising Breastfeeding: A Public Health Priority

• Local Breastfeeding Scene

• Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding in Hong Kong
Optimising Breastfeeding: A Public Health Priority

Benefit of breastfeeding is proportional to its exclusiveness and duration.
From Pregnancy to Breastfeeding: a Continuum

Before birth

Placenta

Baby obtains Warmth, Nutrients and Antibodies

After birth

Breastfeeding
Short Term Benefits of Breastfeeding

UK Millennium Cohort Study (N= 15 890)

- Exclusive BF for 6M
  -> monthly hospital admissions for
    ✓ diarrhea decreased by 53%;
    ✓ respiratory infections decreased by 27%

US economic study

- If 90% of families comply with Exclusive BF for 6 months (vs 12% in 2005)
  ✓ save $13 billion/year; & prevent an excess of 911 deaths

References:
2. Bartick M & Reinhold A. The Burden of Suboptimal Breastfeeding in the United States: A Pediatric Cost. PEDIATRICS Volume 125, Number 5, May 2010
Long Term Benefits of Breastfeeding

Prevent Non Communicable Diseases (NCD):

• Many NCDs (e.g. Cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, allergies) have origins in early life
  • Early nutrition during the sensitive developmental period has biological programming effects on subsequent risks of NCDs and adult health
  • Exclusive BF for 6 months offer effective primary prevention for NCDs

Improve intellectual performance

References:
1. Long-term effects of breastfeeding: a systematic review. WHO 2013
WHO recommends infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months. At around 6 months of age, complementary food should be introduced while continue breastfeeding for 2 years or beyond.
Local Breastfeeding Scene
Breastfeeding Rates, 1997-2012

Exclusive breastfeeding for 4-6 m

Source: regular reports from all maternity units in public and private hospitals in Hong Kong & BF Survey FHS,DH
The Majority of Mothers who have Initiated Cannot Establish Breastfeeding

Source: 2013 BF survey FHS, DH
What are the barriers to breastfeeding?
### Reasons for Stopping Breastfeeding

#### Table 3. Primary reason for weaning according to infants’ age at weaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Total (N=1103)</th>
<th>Infants’ age in months when no longer receiving any breastmilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>&lt;1 (n=469)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient milk</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning to Work†</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby is always hungry†</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal illness†</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sucking / latching problems†</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue / stress†</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient / too time consuming</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nipple / breast pain†</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant illness†</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right time to wean†</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor weight gain</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† p < .001  
a 16 participants did not have a stated reason for weaning

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**Tarrant et al. BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth 2010, 10:27**
Mothers’ Experiences of Breastfeeding in Public Places

Tung Wah Group of Hospitals sorry for café ejecting breastfeeding woman

A mother has spoken out after she was prevented from breastfeeding her baby in a restaurant run by an established Hong Kong chain.

Gloria Chow said that, last Saturday, staff at Blakery Café in Tsim Sha Tsui, run by the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, stopped her feeding her 10-month-old son and asked her to leave.

Chow said that when she approached the Blakery staff, they rushed up to her and asked in an unfriendly tone, “What’s wrong with you?”

When she then tried to sit down in the near-empty café, they threatened to close the business if she refused to leave.

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• In 2013, the trade spent $2.7 billion on advertising and promotion (about 20 times of the spending in 2001).

Source: admanGo
Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding in Hong Kong

A Public Health Approach
The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (WHO 1986)

- **Advocate**
  - Build healthy Public Policy

- **Enable**
  - Create Supportive Environment
  - Strengthen Community Actions

- **Mediate**
  - Develop Personal Skills
  - Reorient Health Services
Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding

WHO & UNICEF

• “Call for action for all governments to implement a comprehensive national IYCF policy, with the establishment of a multi-sectoral committee and appointment of a national coordinator”
  
  *Innocenti Declaration on Infant and Young Child Feeding, 2005 (WHO&UNICEF 2005)*

• Robust evidence ......indicates that multifaceted interventions and not just a single intervention have a cumulative and positive effect on the promotion and support of breastfeeding.”

*An International Comparison Study into the implementation of the WHO Code and other breastfeeding initiatives NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre, University of Sydney, 2011*
The Government’s Comprehensive Strategy to Promote, Protect & Support Breastfeeding

**Goal**
To establish breastfeeding as the norm of infant feeding in Hong Kong

**Objective**
To increase the exclusivity and duration of breastfeeding at the population level
Multiple Determinants of Breastfeeding AND A Systematic Approach to Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding

- Marketing of Formula Milk
- Public perception & acceptance
- Babycare Facilities
- Mother & Baby
- NGOs
- Support in the workplace
- Maternity Leave
- Health Care Facilities
- Health Care Professionals
Ongoing Strategies to Protect, Promote and Support Breastfeeding

1. Baby-friendly Initiative in Healthcare Facilities
2. Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace
3. Breastfeeding Friendly Public Places
4. The **Hong Kong Code** of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes
5. **Publicity** and Public Education
6. A **high level committee** to promote breastfeeding under FHB
Baby-Friendly Initiative in Healthcare Facilities
• “All too often, mothers who wish to breastfeed encounter daunting challenges in moving through the health care system.”

Foreword from the Surgeon General
The Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI)

• A worldwide programme of the WHO & UNICEF that encourages all maternity units and community child health/care organisations to
  1. comply with the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes & subsequent relevant WHA resolutions
  2. fully practise
     • Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding in maternity units (& accredited as Baby-friendly Hospitals)
     • To date, there are > 2,000 hospitals worldwide accredited as “Baby-friendly”
     • Seven Points for Sustaining Breastfeeding in the Community (UNICEF, UK)
• “The single most fundamental intervention to achieve increases in initiation, exclusivity and duration of breastfeeding for all women in a developed country setting.”

Baby-friendly Initiative in Healthcare Facilities

• **HA Birthing Hospitals**
  - In July 2013, the Government has announced its plan for all public birthing hospitals to be designated Baby Friendly Hospital (BFH)
  - QEH, QMH & KWH have started the BFH designation process in 2013.

• **Private Birthing Hospitals**
  - In July and October 2013, BFI have been promulgated by the Government to the Chief Executive of all 10 private birthing hospitals
  - DH will continue to provide training to doctors and nurses of private hospitals
Baby-friendly Initiative in Healthcare Facilities

• Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs)
  – Since 2000, the following have been provided in MCHCs and will be strengthened:
    • Antenatal education
    • Counselling of expectant parents on infant feeding choices
    • Skills teaching
    • Postnatal support
    • Systematic assessment and skills coaching (by nurses)
    • Management of BF problems (by doctors)
    • Hotline: for BF & Infant & young child feeding
  – DH and BFHIHKA collaborative project on “Peer-Counselors” Training Project was conducted in 2012 & 2013.
  – Close collaboration between shared-cared MCHCs and 3 pilot BFHs for seamless transition of care in Q2 2014.
Baby-Friendly Workplace
International Labour Organization (ILO)  
Maternity Protection Convention

**Preamble:** To achieve equality by enabling women to combine their maternal and productive roles; and contributes to health and well-being of mothers and babies

1. A woman shall be provided with the right to **one or more daily breaks** or a daily reduction of hours of work to breastfeed her child. (Convention 2000 (No. 183) Article 10)
   - These breaks or the reduction of daily hours of work shall be counted as working time and remunerated accordingly.

2. Provision should be made for the establishment of **facilities for nursing** under adequate hygienic conditions at or near the workplace. (Recommendation 2000 (No. 191))

- Legislation in at least 92 countries provide lactation breaks for nursing mothers.
Benefits of Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace

**Employers**
- Low cost intervention that support family-friendly work culture
- Improved retention of female employers
- Reduced absenteeism & staff turnover because of improved child health
- Enhanced employee morale and productivity

**Society: Healthy public policy**
- Reduce health care cost in long term
- Sustainability of population: early nutrition lay the foundation for future health
- Environment friendly

USFH NOW TV interview – 鼓勵母乳倡公務員享泵奶時段 (Oct 2013)
An example of Breastfeeding Policy in Hong Kong: Department of Health (2002)

“Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace” Policy in Government Bureaus & Departments (B&Ds)

• In August 2013, SFH appealed to B&Ds to adopt the “Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace” Policy as a public health recommendation
  1. Lactation breaks (up to 1 hour in a work-day for 1st year)
  2. Privacy space / room
  3. Facilities for expression and storage of milk
• Briefings to representatives and Heads of B&Ds were conducted on 15 October 2013 and 28 March 2014 respectively
• By March 2014, 41 out of 81 Government B&Ds had implemented / under planning
Breastfeeding Friendly Public Places
Breastfeeding in Public Places

• In 2008, FHB issued the **Advisory Guidelines on Babycare Facilities (BCF)**
  • 227 BCFs in government premises (as of Dec 2013)

• In 2009, the Buildings Department issued a **Practice Note on the Provision of Babycare Rooms in Commercial Buildings**
  • There are a total of 69 BCFs in shopping malls

*Source: HK BF Mothers' Association website*
Breastfeeding Friendly Premises Scheme

Objective

- to encourage Government B&Ds, NGOs and corporations to welcome mothers to breastfeed in their publicly accessible premises

Proposed measures taken by the Management

1. Set “Breastfeeding Friendly Premises” Policy & communicate to staff
2. Train and assess staff
3. Prepare the environment
4. Communicate the policy to the public
The Hong Kong Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes
The Hong Kong Code of Marketing and Quality of Formula Milk and Related Products, and Food Products for Infants & Young Children (HK Code)

Combating the Aggressive Marketing of Formula Milk

- A Task Force was set up to develop & implement the Hong Kong Code of marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (June 2010)

- HK Code
  - Provides voluntary guidelines primarily to manufacturers and distributors (M&Ds) of designated products for infants and young children aged 0-36 months
    - formula milk; feeding bottle, teats and pacifiers and food products
    - with respect to the marketing and quality of these products while not interfering with their sale

- Public consultation of the draft HK Code
  - October 2012 – February 2013
Publicity and Public Education
Enhanced Publicity & Public Education

Information Services Department
哺乳媽媽化身愛嬰天使 (Apr-May 2013)

TVB programme (新聞透視-奶粉神話) on 20 Apr 2013

Hong Kong Breastfeeding Mothers’ Association 2013 感激乳你同行

Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative - World Breastfeeding Week (Aug 2013)
Enhanced Publicity & Public Education

Infant & Young Child Feeding (Milk feeding and transitional feeding)

- **18 Dec 2013**: Joint Media Briefing (DH, CC, HKCPaed, HKMA, HKBMA) on Healthy Feeding of infant and young children
- **29 Jan 2014**: Media report on picky eating formula
Enhanced Publicity & Public Education
Committee on Promotion of Breastfeeding

A high level committee under FHB
Committee on Promotion of Breastfeeding

**Chairperson:** Under Secretary for Food and Health

**Secretariat:** Department of Health

**Members:**

- **Healthcare Professional Bodies**
  - Hospital Authority
  - Private Hospital Association
  - Hong Kong Academy of Medicine
  - Hong Kong College of Paediatricians
  - Hong Kong College of Family Physicians
  - Hong Kong College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
  - Hong Kong College of Community Medicine
  - Provisional Hong Kong Academy of Nursing
  - Hong Kong Medical Association
  - Hong Kong Doctors Union
  - Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Hong Kong
  - Hong Kong Dietitians Association
  - Hong Kong Nutrition Association
  - Hong Kong College of Nursing
  - Hong Kong Midwives Association

- **Academia**
  - School of Public Health, HKU
  - Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care, CUHK

- **Advisory bodies to Government**
  - Family Council
  - Women’s Commission

- **NGOs**
  - Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative HK Association
  - HK Breastfeeding Mothers’ Association
  - La Leche League HK

- **Community leaders**
  - Ms Jessica NG
  - Ms Judy CHEN
On-going Strategies to Protect, Promote and Support Breastfeeding

- Strengthen baby-friendly initiative in healthcare facilities
- Develop HK Code
- Marketing of Formula Milk
- Public perception & acceptance
- Babycare Facilities
- Support in the workplace
- Support in public venues
- Support in workplace
- Maternity Leave
- Health Care Facilities
- Mother & Baby
- Health Care Professionals
- NGOs
Committee on Promotion of Breastfeeding

- Set up in April 2014
- Aims to:
  - Advise the government on strategies and actions
  - Oversee the planning and implementation

Ensure that the implementation is:
- Coordinated
- Effective
- Sustainable

- Promote HK Code
- Strengthen baby-friendly initiative in healthcare facilities
- Support in workplace
- Strengthen publicity and public education
- Support in public venues
- Others
An African Proverb.....

IT TAKES A WHOLE VILLAGE TO RAISE A Child
Public Health is the Science and Art of preventing disease, promoting health and reduce health inequalities, through organised efforts of the Society...