



## Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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### **Surgical Treatment of Ankyloglossia in Neonates Having Breastfeeding Problems**

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#### **Introduction**

With the strong support and promotion of breastfeeding by the government, the incidence of breastfeeding in Shenzhen has been rising. Currently, the breastfeeding rate in the region is around 90%. Whilst breastfeeding is good for both mothers and babies, it has also brought along problems and challenges.

#### **Objectives**

Ankyloglossia(tongue-tie) is a relatively common congenital anomaly that may lead to failure of breastfeeding. When the attachment of the tongue by the lingual fraenum is inserted low down on the alveolar ridge an infant may not be able to correctly latch onto their mother's breast (Notestine, 1990). Many young midwives, pediatricians and obstetricians are not familiar with this condition and the mothers may end up giving up breastfeeding (as this condition has no significant impact upon bottle feeding behaviors), or the infant misdiagnosed as "failure to thrive". The project is to investigate and develop a better method to help those "tongue-tie" babies in breastfeeding.

#### **Methodology**

In the University of Hong Kong Shenzhen Hospital, we have a team of trained staffs to deal with this condition. When tongue-tie is suspected to cause breastfeeding problems, the infant will be assessed by a nurse specialized in lactation, then oral and systemic examination by a pediatrician to exclude other causes of poor feeding, and then examined by a pediatric dental surgeon. The team collectively decides whether frenotomy could benefit the infant.

## **Result**

In 2016, we have a total of 2402 breastfeed infants, 52 were diagnosed having tongue tie, and 26 had frenotomy. All were performed without incident. Latch improved in all cases, and material pain levels fell significantly after the procedure.