

BREAST FEEDING VERSUS BOTTLE FEEDING

‘In babies and infants that have been breastfed by their mothers, what are the developmental benefits compared to those babies and infants that have been bottle fed with formula?’

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INTRODUCTION:

It is known that ‘breast is best’ however there is still a large percentage of children formula fed. Research into this particular topic identifies the global effort currently being made to achieve the World Health Organisation’s goal of increasing the number of infants being breastfed as opposed to formula fed (World Health Organisation, 2003).

RESEARCH SHOWS:

In health care settings, formula feeding can be used due to the mothers own health or the health of the infant; the infant may require an increase in nutrients specifically available in formula feeding – most commonly seen in infants who have a low weight for their gestation (Howard, Howard, Lanphear, Eberly, deBlieck, Oakes & Lawrence, 2003). However the benefits of breast feeding strongly outweigh those of formula feeding and there are a large amount of infants fed formula due to lack of understanding by the parents, or by choice.

Breast milk:

- Is an excellent form of nutrition that provides the baby with natural nutrients, antibodies and the decreased likelihood of hospitalisation due to respiratory infections (National Library of Medicine, 2015).
- It reduces chances of obesity which is an increasing health issue for New Zealand children (Michels, Willet, Graubard, Vaidya, Cantwell, Sansbury, & Forman, 2007).
- Infants who are breastfed, as opposed to formula, gain weight at a slower rate over their first year, this is due to an increased amount of protein as well as the limitations of natural energy supply from breast milk (Michels et al, 2007).
- Infants who are breastfed take longer to feed but do have better respiratory function resulting in less hypoxic episodes (Perinat, 2007).
- Breast feeding is a natural way for a mother to create a bond with her baby and initiating breast feeding as early in the relationship as possible allows the bond to be made between mother and child (Perinat, 2007).

References

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Increase the amount of breastfeeding friendly locations
- Increase in undergraduate health professional’s education around the importance of breastfeeding
- Increase in programmes available to educate mothers on the importance of breastfeeding

A large percentage of the mothers who formula feed are a part of the lower socio-economic group (Primary Health Care Strategy, 2001). Increasing the amount of free, informative support will make the education readily available, accessible, affordable, appropriate and accountable for those mothers.

CONCLUSION:

Despite breast milk being more beneficial than formula, there are still infants who are fed formula usually due to the socio-economic placing of the family, lack of education or by choice. In order to meet the World Health Organisation’s goal of decreasing the rates of infants being formula fed, community actions must take place to provide these mothers with the education, confidence and support to breastfeed their child.

PECOT Model

Category	Information relating to question	Explanation
P – Population	Babies and infants	I identified this population as the one I will focus on as it is the age group most associated with breastfeeding and the benefits that come with it.
E – Exposure/ Environmental (Intervention)	Babies and infants who have been fully/exclusively breastfed by their mothers.	The main focus of the literature review is on breast feeding there for it is important to research those babies that are breast fed and the benefits of being breast fed.
C – Comparison/ Control	Babies and infants who have not been breastfed/have been formula fed.	In comparison to babies who are breastfed, I feel as though it is important to look into formula feeding, what the benefits and disadvantages are and why it there is such a high percentage choosing to use it over breastfeeding.
O – Outcome	Babies provided with breast milk according to the Ministry of Health recommendation.	The ultimate outcome for this literature review is determining the health benefits and disadvantages of using breast milk as opposed to formula.
T – Time	Until 6 months of age	The Ministry of Health and in association with the World Health Organisation recommend that babies/infants are breastfed until they are six months of age, although it can continue with the inclusion of other solids and liquids as they get older. Therefor it is important this literature review focusses on the infants in this age range in particular.

Through using the PECOT model (Schneider, Whitehead, Lo-Biondo-Wood & Haber, 2013) a definite, refined question was produced, ‘In babies and infants that have been breastfed by their mothers, what are the developmental benefits compared to those babies and infants that have been bottle fed with formula?’

RATIONAL:

The decision to complete this part of the assignment in the form of a poster was made due to the content itself and audience it is aimed towards. I felt that the group of people the information is aimed at can include not only undergraduate health professionals and health professionals themselves but also general members of society – mothers, or mothers-to-be, in particular. With the understanding and consideration of a large target audience, a poster is more appropriate than a submission.

The use of a poster allows for the presentation of both written information, to develop understanding, and visual effects, to grab the reader’s attention. This poster allows the reader to gain a sufficient amount of information even though it is presented in the simple format of a poster. This allows health professionals to gain adequate information while it still has the simplicity aspect to appeal to general people. Posters are commonly used in the academic and public health fields and when completed successfully they increase knowledge and change attitudes and behaviours. The design of a poster can determine its successfulness in the above (Ilic & Rowe, 2015).

References:

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- Schneider, Z., Whitehead., D., LoBiondo-Wood, G., & Haber, J. (2013). Nursing and midwifery research methods and appraisal for evidence – based practice (4th ed.). Sydney, NSW, Australia: Mosby.