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REVIEW ARTICLE

BENEFITS OF BREAST FEEDING FOR MOTHER AND INFANT

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ABSTRACT

According to World Health Organization (WHO) breastfeeding is the normal way of providing young infants with the nutrients needed for healthy growth and development. It is beneficial for a new born as well as a mother as it protects both of them from numerous diseases. In this review we have considered the studies having its concern with benefits of breast feeding for mother and infant. In the last section of the study discussion is made for promotion of breast feeding.

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INTRODUCTION

Breast feeding is accepted as an important health-promoting behavior, which confers various health benefits for both mothers and infants (McCarter, 2010). As it is known that breast milk is the first natural food for infants, there is no other food to replace it (Çinar et al., 2009). According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), breast milk is the baby's 'first immunization' that helps to protect against many health problems (UNICEF, 2002). The rate of initiation of breastfeeding for the total US population based on National Immunization Survey data was 75%. Among low-income mothers, the breast feeding initiation rate was 67.5%, rate of initiation of breast feeding is found 59.7% in mother's younger than 20 years and 79.3% in mothers older than 30 years (Anonymous, 2012). Earlier, breastfeeding was reported associated with improved clarity of speech in boys and girls (Broad, 1972). The effect of breastfeeding on speech and reading in boys was also reported, concluding that breastfeeding accelerates the rate of maturation of boys (Broad, 1972; Broad, 1975). One of the studies considered, was found showing small but significant increases in later intelligence and educational attainment between breast and formula-fed infants (Wendy H. Oddy et al., 2012; Rodgers, 1978). It was also pinpointed that breastfeeding mothers are able to lose extra fat

stored during pregnancy as milk production burns calories (Dewey et al., 1993; Brewer et al., 1989). We came across a study highlighting various benefits of breast feeding to infants viz. improved oxygenation and temperature regulation during feedings, higher oxygen saturation, better coordinated sucking, swallowing, breathing pattern, increased body temperature, fewer episodes of apnea and bradycardia, skin-to-skin contact, increased breast milk volume, greater production of maternal milk antibodies, enhanced nutritional and immunological properties of breast milk, lower risk of bacterial contamination and growth due to handling, better oral development, optimal mandibular development, strengthening of the jaw muscles, increased nasal cavity space, improved future teeth alignment, decrease in malocclusions, greater breathing efficiency. In the same study some of the benefits to mother, described as reduced risk of breast trauma, less risk of mastitis with ineffective emptying of breast, lower risk of damage to nipple from breast pump, reduced risks to mothers' health, decreased incidence of type 2 diabetes, reduced risk of breast cancer and reduction in perceived stress and negative mood after feeding (Buckley and Charles, 2006). Another study also reported that that breastfeeding mothers loose stubborn hip and thigh fat faster than their formula-feeding counterparts. This study also suggested that breastfeeding can improve controlled blood sugar and ideal weight loss caused by breastfeeding that result in a lower risk of cardiovascular disease (Schwarz et al., 2010; McClure et al., 2012).

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In one of the studies it was revealed that younger mothers; with 12 years education or less, having stress, having low incomes, and who smoked during pregnancy were more likely to breastfeed for less than six months. Study also disclosed the association of postnatal depression and inappropriate fetal growth with a shorter duration of breast feeding (Wendy H. Oddy *et al.*, 2012). It is also reported that breastfeeding can improve glucose tolerance in mothers with recent gestational diabetes mellitus (DM) and decrease the risk of developing Type 2 DM later in life (Jager *et al.*, 2014). Raha Afshariani reported that aortic calcification, the risk factor of stroke, heart attack and other cardio vascular complications, are less in mothers with three months or more history of breastfeeding than in those who had not breastfed. In this study breastfeeding lactating mothers were also reported protected against premenstrual breast cancer, uterine and ovarian cancers (Raha Afshariani *et al.*, 2014). American Academy of Pediatrics showed that breast milk provides infant with significant protection against chronic diseases such as allergies and asthma, and other infectious diseases including meningitis, diarrhea, ear infection and pneumonia (Breastfeeding, 2005). According to the UNICEF the effects of breastfeeding on the development of oral cavity and airway have a good chance of good dental health than artificially fed infant. (UNICEF, 2012) Breastfeeding is also found protective against child obesity (Moss *et al.*, 2014), Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), allergic diseases, digestive disease and cognitive (Breastfeeding, 2005). One of the study also reported that it is more prevalent among lower SES groups, (Gibson-Davis *et al.*, 2006; Victora *et al.*, 2000) and among foreign-born mothers (Gibson-Davis *et al.*, 2006) among the college educated (Ryan *et al.*, 2002).

DISCUSSION

Today, breast feeding is strongly advocated by several international and national organizations. An educated woman must be more aware about it as compare to uneducated women. There is a need to promote female education so that breast awareness and breast feeding can be promoted.

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