

Development

Cite this article: Baldwin S, Bick D, Spiro A. (2021) Translating fathers' support for breastfeeding into practice. *Primary Health Care Research & Development* 22(e60): 1–5. doi: [10.1017/S1463423621000682](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1463423621000682)

Received: 19 April 2021
Revised: 24 August 2021
Accepted: 4 October 2021

Key words:

breastfeeding; fathers; health visitors; infant feeding; midwives

Author for correspondence:

Sharin Baldwin, Warwick Clinical Trials Unit,
University of Warwick, Warwick, UK.
E-mail: sharin.baldwin@warwick.ac.uk

Translating fathers' support for breastfeeding into practice

Sharin Baldwin^{1,2} , Debra Bick^{1,3} and Alison Spiro⁴

¹Warwick Clinical Trials Unit, University of Warwick, Warwick, UK; ²Learning and Organisational Development, London North West University Healthcare Trust, London, UK; ³University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire, Warwick, UK and ⁴Brunel University, London, UK

Abstract

Breastfeeding has numerous health benefits for the mother and child. For breastfeeding to be successful and continue for longer, women need adequate support. Fathers/partners play an important role in providing this support to women, but research suggests that fathers/partners often feel inadequately informed and supported by health professionals. Midwives and health visitors are in ideal positions to offer women and their partner's timely and relevant breastfeeding information and support throughout the perinatal period. This article discusses the benefits of breastfeeding, presents research evidence of the crucial role fathers/partners play in promoting and supporting breastfeeding, and recommends ways in which health professionals can provide breastfeeding information and support to fathers/partners.

Introduction

Breastfeeding carries a number of health benefits for the mother and child, as well as wider economic benefits to society. The supportive partner of the breastfeeding person has an important role to play in building confidence in families and therefore strategies to increase breastfeeding rates need to include better support for partners/fathers. This requires a shift in training and practice for healthcare professionals, where historically the main focus for breastfeeding promotion and support may have only been on the mother rather than also including the father. This article discusses the benefits of breastfeeding and presents findings from the UK based New Dad Study (Baldwin *et al.*, 2018; 2019; 2021) to highlight the crucial role that fathers play in promoting and supporting breastfeeding, and recommends ways in which health professionals can provide breastfeeding information and support to fathers/partners.

Background

The World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Strategy for infant and Young Child Feeding was first published in 2003 and subsequently reviewed in 2020, in response to concerns about declining global rates of breastfeeding. It stated that only 40% of infants were exclusively breastfed for 6 months globally and estimated that around 820 000 children's lives could be saved globally, if all children were optimally breastfed for up to 23 months (WHO, 2020). The strategy aimed to revitalise efforts to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding and build on previous initiatives such as the Innocenti Declaration (Unicef, 2005) and Baby Friendly Hospital initiative's Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding (WHO, 1991). It called on all governments to develop and implement policies and strategies to promote breastfeeding. It recommended that the support offered to women should be delivered by well-trained staff, able to offer counselling skills, and link with other support agencies in the community.

Evidence shows that breastmilk offers infants optimal nutrition as it is biologically designed for an infant's gut, easy to digest, and uniquely produced for each infant, with content changing over time to promote healthy growth and development (Shenker, 2019). Breastmilk has been described as a type of personalised medicine, not only providing the infant protection from infections, but also conferring longer-term health benefits which persist into later adult life (Victora *et al.*, 2016). Breastfed children are estimated to be around 30% less likely to suffer from obesity in childhood and later life (Rito *et al.*, 2019), which is an important public health consideration especially as one in three children aged 6–9 years and over 50% of adults are overweight or obese in Europe (Rito *et al.*, 2019). Breastfeeding also offers some protection against other non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory diseases, conditions which present the greatest burden of disease in Europe in the 21st century (Rollins *et al.*, 2016).

Breastfeeding has also been associated with higher IQ levels (Horta *et al.*, 2013; Strom *et al.*, 2019), better school attendance and physical fitness rates (Tambalis *et al.*, 2019), and improved job prospects and higher incomes in adult life (Victora *et al.*, 2015) in low-, middle-, and

© The Author(s), 2021. Published by Cambridge University Press. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

high-income countries. The emotional closeness the infant has with their mother when breastfeeding responsively helps to build a strong reciprocal relationship that aids brain development, increases feelings of trust, which in turn could impact on positive mental health outcomes for mothers and their babies (Oddy *et al.*, 2010; Xu *et al.*, 2014; Borra *et al.*, 2015; Brown, 2018).

Breastfeeding offers a number of health benefits for women including reduced risk of breast and ovarian cancer, osteoporosis, heart disease, and diabetes (Rollins *et al.*, 2016). Previous detailed economic analysis reported that any investment in breastfeeding support would pay for itself in 1 year and would offer governments large savings over the lifetime of the population (Renfrew *et al.*, 2012). Despite these potential health and economic benefits (Renfrew *et al.*, 2012), progress to establish national breastfeeding strategies has been slow (Zakaria-Grkovic *et al.*, 2020). A UK investigation carried out in England, Wales, and Scotland in 2018–2019 aimed to scale up the protection, promotion, and support for breastfeeding, using the evidence-based Yale University ‘Gear Model’, called Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly (Yale School of Public Health, 2020). This initiative led by Kent University involved multi-disciplinary teams from all three countries made recommendations on the way forward. The devolved governments in Scotland and Wales have reported on these in 2019 (Scottish Government, 2019; Eida and Kendall, 2019), but England has yet to do so.

The World Breastfeeding Trends initiative UK report (WBTi, 2016) systematically evaluated breastfeeding policies and practices using an internationally recognised tool, bringing together key organisations involved in infant and maternal health to collaborate on monitoring the WHO Global Strategy (WHO, 2003). Ten indicators were identified for evaluating policies and practices, one of which included the need to improve healthcare professionals’ training in breastfeeding. We propose that breastfeeding training needs to include how health professionals can adequately support fathers/partners as well as mothers, given the important role they play in promoting and supporting breastfeeding, as discussed in the next section.

The importance of including fathers/partners in breastfeeding promotion and support

Research shows that fathers play an important role in promoting and supporting their partners with breastfeeding (Tohotoa *et al.*, 2011; Rempel and Rempel, 2011; Sherriff and Hall, 2011; Datta *et al.*, 2012; Sherriff *et al.*, 2014; Hansen *et al.*, 2018). In a systematic review and meta-analysis of the effectiveness of targeting fathers for breastfeeding promotion, which included eight interventional studies from a range of countries (Australia = 1, Brazil = 1, Canada = 1, China = 1, Iran = 1, Italy = 1, Turkey = 2) which presented data from 1852 families, Mahesh *et al.* (2018) reported favourable results for targeting fathers in the promotion of breastfeeding. The review found breastfeeding education and promotion for fathers in the antenatal and postnatal periods improved exclusive breastfeeding rates at 6 months, decreased the probability of full formula feeding at 2 months, decreased the occurrence of breastfeeding-related problems, increased the level of support offered by the father in breastfeeding-related issues, and improved the mothers’ knowledge and attitude towards breastfeeding (Mahesh *et al.*, 2018).

Despite this, fathers continue to report inadequate levels of information and support from health professionals regarding

breastfeeding. Fathers’ needs relating to breastfeeding knowledge and support were identified in the recent New Dad Study (NEST) carried out in the UK (Baldwin *et al.*, 2018; 2019; 2021). This was a three-part study incorporating a systematic review, a qualitative study, and a mixed-method study, aimed at exploring the mental health needs of first-time fathers.

The systematic review included 22 studies from eight countries (Australia = 3, Canada = 2, Japan = 1, Singapore = 1, Sweden = 3, Taiwan = 1, UK = 9, USA = 2), published between 1990 and 2017 found wide disparities between men’s expectations and the reality of their partner’s breastfeeding experiences (Baldwin *et al.*, 2018). New fathers found breastfeeding a more difficult experience than anticipated, it was associated with increased anxiety and they felt totally unprepared to be able to support their partner to breastfeed successfully, as reflected in the following quotes from study participants:

“i have to say that there i was not prepared at all but had a mental picture that it’s just a matter of laying the baby to the breast and it all works. When it didn’t work you stood there: aha, what the hell do we do now?” (Baldwin *et al.*, 2018, p-2132)

This often left them feeling ‘helpless’: *“Breastfeeding was what i found most difficult. i didn’t know how to help, i felt useless.”* (Baldwin *et al.*, 2018, p-2132)

These findings were consistent with previous research which suggests that the attributes of positive father support in relation to breastfeeding are dependent on the father’s knowledge about breastfeeding; their attitudes to breastfeeding; their involvement in the decision-making process about breastfeeding; and their ability to provide practical and emotional support to their partner (Sherriff *et al.*, 2014).

A qualitative study of 21 first-time fathers in London, England which formed the second NEST study (Baldwin *et al.*, 2019), found new fathers described not knowing how to help or support their partner with breastfeeding when they were experiencing difficulties. One father stated: *“Well, i think the most difficult thing that we faced was breastfeeding, and there was a lot of information that was given and it was all, kind of, geared towards how breastfeeding is great for your child, and all of those kind of things, but it was none of the, kind of, practical tips of what to do once things start going wrong, in the sense that your child may not know how to latch. So, as a dad, what can you do to, kind of, support that?”* (Baldwin *et al.*, 2019, p-7).

The third NEST study, a mixed-methods study of 52 first-time fathers, reported that one father felt that the health visitor was *“not being honest that breastfeeding can potentially be very painful”* and found this to be the least helpful aspect of their visit (Baldwin *et al.*, 2021). In this third study, findings showed that men wanted more ‘realistic’ information about breastfeeding and better support for their partners, as one father stated, *“everybody said breastfeeding was easy, there was no mention that it could be hard”* (F12). In infant feeding classes, men described as being presented with *“a utopian view of how feeding would come about, you know, you take the baby and you plonk him on it, and it just works like magic”* (F19). In addition, they also reported receiving inconsistent and conflicting advice from health professionals regarding breastfeeding (Baldwin *et al.*, 2021).

The findings from NEST (Baldwin *et al.*, 2018; 2019; 2021) highlight the importance of providing fathers with accurate and consistent information about breastfeeding prior to the birth of their baby, and planned, ongoing postnatal support to ensure that they felt better able to support their partners. This is reflected in

several earlier studies (Sherriff *et al.*, 2014; Hansen *et al.*, 2018; Mahesh *et al.*, 2018). If fathers are to provide better support to their partners, breastfeeding is likely to be more successful, continue for longer, and women more likely to feel confident with breastfeeding (Avery and Magnus, 2011; Mannion *et al.*, 2013; Sherriff *et al.*, 2014; Al Namir *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, timely and relevant information targeted at fathers during the perinatal period can help reduce their own anxiety, increase their problem-solving capabilities, and develop their awareness of potential breastfeeding difficulties, infant developmental milestones, and maternal postnatal depression (Sherriff *et al.*, 2014).

Health professionals' role in providing breastfeeding information and support to fathers

Based on the last UK infant Feeding Survey, data for which were collated in 2010, over 8 out of 10 women in the UK gave up breastfeeding before they planned because they did not receive the support they needed from families, society, and professionals (McAndrew *et al.*, 2012). Health professionals including midwives and health visitors are in an ideal position to enable fathers/partners to support breastfeeding, especially in the early days and weeks following birth, when the woman is establishing breastfeeding (Baldwin *et al.*, 2018).

Breastfeeding programmes tailored for both parents are more effective in increasing breastfeeding rates and duration (Abbass-Dick *et al.*, 2015). However, before health professionals can effectively support fathers/partners, it is important for them to understand and acknowledge the importance of the father's/partner's role in providing breastfeeding support to their partner, practically and emotionally (Bhairo and Elliott, 2018; Baldwin *et al.*, 2021).

Effective engagement with fathers is the first step to providing breastfeeding support. Health professionals, such as midwives and health visitors have often cited their limited experience of working with fathers and their lack of training and confidence as barriers to their ability to provide adequate support (Oldfield and Carr, 2017; Whitelock, 2016; Wynter *et al.*, 2021). Training for health professionals working with parents needs to incorporate training on father/partner inclusiveness and engagement. Such training has been shown to be effective in improving knowledge and attitudes and competences amongst course participants, whilst also improving organisational practices and rates of father engagement (Burgess *et al.*, 2014; Burn *et al.*, 2019).

Midwives and health visitors need to include and engage with fathers/partners during the routine antenatal appointments, so that they can highlight the importance of their role in the success of breastfeeding. An understanding of how babies behave instinctively after birth through skin-to-skin contact with their mothers, by latching themselves on the breasts, will enable the couple enjoy this wonderful 'golden hour' after birth by seeing, stroking, and connecting with their babies for the first time. Emotional support, reassurance, and encouragement offered by fathers/partners will support women's confidence and self-efficacy (Mannion *et al.*, 2013; Bhairo and Elliott, 2018).

Some parents may view formula milk as being as good as breast milk and the 'normal' way to feed babies. Health professionals can use antenatal contacts to explore parents' attitudes to breastfeeding, and through the use of non-judgemental communication skills, help them to perceive breastfeeding as an achievable option, offering timely, realistic, evidence-based information on benefits. Fathers/partners need timely and appropriate information about

breastfeeding during pregnancy and ongoing support postnatally to ensure they feel better able to support their partners (Sherriff *et al.*, 2014; Hansen *et al.*, 2018; Baldwin *et al.*, 2018).

In a qualitative study which collated data from 51 health professionals in 10 focus groups with Scottish NHS staff (including health visitors and midwives), Marks and O'Connor (2015) reported that although clinicians felt positively towards breastfeeding, their role was one of informing rather than promoting and 'moralising' breastfeeding. 'Moralising' was described as associating breastfeeding with being perceived to be a 'good' mother (Marks and O'Connor, 2015). This is an important consideration for health professionals, and it is crucial that they offer parents accurate and realistic information about breastfeeding. This should include information about all the benefits as well as clarity about infant feeding difficulties they may face in early parenthood, and how and where to seek advice from when 'things go wrong' (Baldwin *et al.*, 2019). Providing this level of information could help parents make an informed choice about breastfeeding.

Fathers/partners need greater support, information, and advice on the practicalities of breastfeeding, particularly in view of their frustrations about how to help their partner succeed (Wöckel *et al.*, 2007; Sherriff *et al.*, 2009). Information and discussions with fathers/partners should be aimed at increasing their knowledge about breastfeeding; helping them develop a positive attitude towards breastfeeding; involving them in the decision-making process; and guidance on how to provide practical and emotional support to their partner.

Realistic expectations that breastfeeding takes time to establish effectively are important, but if the baby is positioning and attaching well, initial difficulties such as painful feeding, may be prevented, and likely to be resolved. Parents' understanding of new-born babies' behaviour will help them realise that 'fussiness' at certain times of the day may have nothing to do with how they are fed. For more complex problems, health professionals can signpost fathers/partners to access help from local infant feeding teams, the National Breastfeeding Helpline, third sector breastfeeding counsellors or lactation consultants. An integrated approach with other infant feeding agencies and peer support services will ensure parents receive the optimum support they need to achieve their goals.

It is crucial that fathers/partners are offered guidance on how to support their partner in ways other than direct infant feeding such as giving their partner time to rest, making them food and drink, offering regular praise, reassurance, and encouragement, as these may not be obvious interventions (Sherriff *et al.*, 2009). Involving fathers/partners in the breastfeeding decision making process as early as possible has the potential to make them breastfeeding advocates, where they can protect and defend parenting decisions against negative or unhelpful interference, for example from their extended family who may encourage artificial milk feeding or undermine their partner's efforts (Pontes *et al.*, 2009; Tohota *et al.*, 2011; Sherriff *et al.*, 2014). Preparing and supporting fathers appropriately could also increase their self-confidence and self-efficacy (Datta *et al.*, 2012). This has the potential to increase breastfeeding rates and duration, contributing to better outcomes for babies, mothers, and the wider public health agenda.

Recommendations for supporting fathers/partners

Based on the evidence presented in this article, we propose the following strategies that health professionals could use to involve and support fathers/partners with breastfeeding:

- involve and engage with fathers/partners in the decision-making process about infant feeding in the antenatal period.
- Provide fathers/partners with appropriate information about breastfeeding prior to the birth of their baby, to include the short-term and long-term benefits.
- inform fathers about the importance of their role in supporting their partner with breastfeeding.
- Have 'realistic' discussions about breastfeeding, informing parents that breastfeeding is a skill that may take time to get the hang off. include 'frank discussions' about the difficulties they may face in early parenthood (such as sleepless nights, exhaustion, relationship changes etc.) and what to do when 'things go wrong'
- Enquire about and explore fathers'/partners' views about breastfeeding and any anxieties or uncertainties they may have.
- if fathers/partners are worried about missing out, educate them about other ways of getting involved with their baby, such as skin-to-skin contact, playing, bathing, changing nappies, talking, using a sling etc.
- Provide fathers/partners with information about the practical support they can offer their partners to support breastfeeding, such as helping with household duties, giving them a massage, allowing them to rest, making food and drinks for them, restricting visitors, and finding additional sources of support for them if necessary.
- Provide fathers/partners with information about the emotional support they can offer their partners during breastfeeding, such as reassurance and encouragement.
- Ensure fathers/partners (as well as mothers) are aware of local and national breastfeeding support services and how to access them. These should include online resources, telephone help-lines, and support groups.
- Continue to engage with and provide ongoing breastfeeding support to fathers/partners following the birth to ensure that they are kept well informed and can continue to support their partners.
- Encourage fathers/partners to seek specialist support if their partner is experiencing any breastfeeding difficulties.

it is important that health professionals meet the needs of fathers/partners with relation to breastfeeding. Regular feedback from parents will enable the collection of such data to evaluate the support provided and make the necessary adjustments when needed. Any steps taken to include, involve, and advise fathers/partners should also be documented in the family records to provide an audit trail and allow for further evaluation to be undertaken. Local and national resources, policies, and guidelines for fathers need to be designed acknowledging the fathers' role (Bhairo and Elliott, 2018).

Conclusion/summary

From the evidence, breastfeeding offers many health benefits for the maternal–infant dyad and increasing breastfeeding rates globally could have a positive impact on global public health. As fathers/partners play an important role in promoting and supporting women with breastfeeding, it is crucial that health professionals provide adequate information and support to them too. The contacts that midwives and health visitors have with women in the antenatal and postnatal periods should include their partners whenever possible. Discussions around breastfeeding during these contacts could increase partner's knowledge, confidence, and

expectations, enabling them to support their partners in an informed way. Informing both parents about the practical aspects of breastfeeding is just as important and should include providing them with details of how to access further professional support if needed. While it is recognised that only providing fathers/partners with information about breastfeeding may not be enough to change their attitudes or behaviour towards breastfeeding, it could nonetheless act as a starting point to increasing father engagement and participation in breastfeeding. Midwives and health visitors are in ideal positions to offer mothers, fathers/supportive partners timely and relevant breastfeeding information and support throughout the perinatal period. Further research is needed to explore what influences fathers'/partners' attitudes to breastfeeding and how their needs relating to infant feeding could be best addressed by health professionals. The creation of guidance to support fathers/partners with breastfeeding that includes fathers from diverse backgrounds is likely to make it more acceptable to men.

Acknowledgements. A big thanks to all the fathers who took part in the New Dad Study, for sharing their views and experiences and also to the father advisers (patient and public involvement group) who supported and informed the study throughout. SB was funded by a National Institute for Health Research Clinical Doctoral Fellowship (iACDRF-2015-01-031) for this study. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the National Health Service, the NiHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.

Author Contributions. SB conducted the New Dad Study with support from DB. All authors have contributed to this paper and reviewed the final manuscript.

References

- Abbass-Dick J, Stern SB, Nelson LE, Watson W and Dennis CL (2015) Coparenting breastfeeding support and exclusive breastfeeding: a randomized controlled trial. *Pediatrics* **135**, 102–110.
- Al Namir H, Brady AM and Gallagher L (2017) Fathers and breastfeeding: attitudes, involvement and support. *British Journal of Midwifery* **25**, 426–440.
- Avery AB and Magnus JH (2011) Expectant fathers and mothers perceptions of breastfeeding and formula feeding: a focus group study in three US cities. *Journal of Human Lactation* **27**, 147–154.
- Baldwin S, Malone M, Sandall J and Bick D (2018) Mental health and wellbeing during the transition to fatherhood: a systematic review of first-time fathers' experiences. *JBI Database of Systematic Reviews and Implementation Reports* **16**, 2118–2191.
- Baldwin S, Malone M, Sandall J and Bick D (2019) A qualitative exploratory study of UK first-time fathers' experiences, mental health and wellbeing needs during their transition to fatherhood. *BMJ Open* **9**, e030792. <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/9/9/e030792.info>
- Baldwin S, Malone M, Murrells T, Sandall J and Bick D (2021) A mixed-methods feasibility study of an intervention to improve men's mental health and wellbeing during their transition to fatherhood. *BMC Public Health* **21**, 1813. <https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-021-11870-x>
- Bhairo RL and Elliott H (2018) Encouraging breastfeeding: the role of fathers. *Journal of Health Visiting* **6**, 290–301.
- Borra C, Iacovou M and Sevilla A (2015) New evidence on breastfeeding and postpartum depression: the importance of understanding women's intentions. *Maternal and Child Health Journal* **19**, 897–907.
- Brown A (2018) What do women lose if they are prevented from meeting their breastfeeding goals?. *Clinical Lactation* **9**, 200–207.
- Burgess A, Jones K, Nolan M and Humphries H (2014) Evaluation of a Training Programme and Toolkit to Assist Health Visitors and Community Practitioners to Engage with Fathers as Part of the Healthy Child initiative: A developmental study using action research. *Fatherhood*

- institute. <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/2014/father-inclusiveness-training-for-health-visitors-can-improve-practice/>
- Burn M, Tully LA, Jiang Y, Piotrowska PJ, Collins DAJ, Sargeant K, Hawes D, Moul C, Lenroot RK, Frick PJ, Anderson V, Kimonis ER and Dadds MR (2019) Evaluating Practitioner Training to improve Competencies and Organizational Practices for Engaging Fathers in Parenting interventions. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development* 50, 230–244.
- Datta J, Graham B and Wellings K (2012) The role of fathers in breastfeeding: decision-making and support. *British Journal of Midwifery* 20, 159–167.
- Eida TJ and Kendall S (2019) Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly in Wales: context, findings and recommendations. in: Launch of the Wales Breastfeeding Action Plan, 03 Jul 2019 (Unpublished). <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/78271/>
- Hansen E, Tesch L and Ayton J (2018) ‘They’re born to get breastfed’- how fathers view breastfeeding: a mixed method study. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* 18, 238. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-018-1827-9>.
- Horta BL, Bas A, Bhargava SK, Fall CHD, Feranil A, Kadt J, Martorell R, Richter LM, Stein AD, Victora CG and The COHORTS group (2013) infant feeding and school attainment in five cohorts from low- and middle-income countries. *PLoS ONE* 8, e71548. [10.1371/journal.pone.0071548](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0071548).
- Mahesh PKB, Gunathunga MW, Arnold SM, Jayasinghe C, Pathirana S, Makarim MF, Manawadu PM and Senanayake SJ (2018) Effectiveness of targeting fathers for breastfeeding promotion: systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Public Health* 18, 1140. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-6037-x>
- Mannion CA, Hobbs AJ, McDonald SW and Tough SC (2013) Maternal perceptions of partner support during breastfeeding. *international Breastfeed Journal* 8, 4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1746-4358-8-4>.
- Marks D and O'Connor R (2015) Breastfeeding support and promotion: the health professional's perspective. *Journal of Health Visiting* 3, 38–46.
- McAndrew F, Thompson J, Fellows L, Large A, Speed M and Renfrew M (2012) *infant Feeding Survey 2010* Health and Social Care information Centre. https://sp.ukdataservice.ac.uk/doc/7281/mrdoc/pdf/7281_ifs-uk-2010_report.pdf
- Oddy WH, Kendall GE, Li J, Jacoby P, Robinson M, de Klerk NH, Silburn SR, Zubrick SR, Landau LI and Stanley FJ (2010) The Long-Term Effects of Breastfeeding on Child and Adolescent Mental Health: A Pregnancy Cohort Study Followed for 14 Years. *The Journal of Pediatrics* 156, 568–574.
- Oldfield V and Carr H (2017) Postnatal depression: Student health visitors perceptions of their role in supporting fathers. *Journal of Health Visiting*, 5(3):143–149.
- Pontes C, Osorio MM and Alexandrino AC (2009) Building a place for the father as an ally for breast feeding. *Midwifery* 25, 195–202.
- Rempel LA and Rempel JK (2011) The breastfeeding team: the role of involved fathers in the breastfeeding family. *Journal of Human Lactation* 27, 115–121.
- Renfrew M, Pokhrel S, Quigley M, McCormick F, Fox-Rushby J, Dodds R, Duffy S, Trueman P and Williams A (2012) Preventing disease and saving resources: the potential contribution of increasing breastfeeding rates in the UK. UNICEF UK.
- Rito Ai, Buoncristiano M, Spinelli A, Salanave B, Kunešová M, Hejgaard T, Solano MG, Fijalkowska A, Sturua L, Hyska J, Kelleher C, Duleva V, Milanovic SM, Sant'Angelo VF, Abdrakhmanova S, Kujundzic E, Peterkova V, Gualtieri A, Pudule I, Petrauskiene A, Tanrygulyeva M, Sherali R, Huidumac-Petrescu C, Williams J, Ahrens W, Breda J (2019) ‘Association between Characteristics at Birth, Breastfeeding and Obesity in 22 Countries: The WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance initiative-COSi 2015/2017’. *Obesity Facts* 12, 226–244.
- Rollins N, Bhandari N, Hajeebhoy N, Horton S, Lutter C, Martinez J, Piwoz E, Richter L and Victora (2016) Why invest, and what it will take to improve breastfeeding practices?. *The Lancet* 387, 491–504.
- Scottish Government (2019) Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland: report. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/becoming-breastfeeding-friendly-scotland-report/pages/3/>
- Shenker N (2019) The mysteries of milk RSB. Available at: <https://www.rsb.org.uk/biologist-features/158-biologist/features/1758-the-mysteries-of-milk>
- Sherriff N and Hall V (2011) Engaging and supporting fathers to promote breastfeeding: a new role for Health Visitors?. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* 25, 467–475.
- Sherriff N, Hall V and Panton C (2014) Engaging and supporting fathers to promote breast feeding: A concept analysis. *Midwifery* 30, 667–677.
- Sherriff N, Hall V and Pickin M (2009) Fathers' perspectives on breastfeeding: ideas for intervention. *British Journal of Midwifery* 17, 223–227.
- Strom M, Mortensen EL, Kesmodel US, Halldorsson T, Olsen J and Olsen SJ (2019) Is breast feeding associated with offspring IQ at age 5? Findings from prospective cohort: Lifestyle During Pregnancy Study. *BMJ Open* 9, e023134. doi: [10.1136/bmjopen-2018-023134](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-023134).
- Tambalis KD, Mourtakos S, Panagiotakos DB and Sidossis LS (2019) Exclusive Breastfeeding is Favorably Associated with Physical Fitness in Children. *Breastfeeding Medicine* 14, 390–397.
- Tohotoa J, Maycock B, Hauck Y, Howat P, Burns S, and Binns C (2011) Supporting mothers to breastfeed: the development and process evaluation of a father inclusive perinatal education support program in Perth, Western Australia. *Health Promotion International* 26(3):351–361. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daq077>.
- Unicef (2005) Innocenti Declaration 2005 on infant and Young Child Feeding, UNICEF-IRC. <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/435-innocenti-declaration-2005-on-infant-and-young-child-feeding.html>
- Victora CG, Bahl R, Barros AJD, França GVA, Horton S, Krasevec J, Murch S, Sankar MJ, Walker N, Rollins NC and Lancet Breastfeeding Series Group (2016) Breastfeeding in the 21st century: epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect. *The Lancet* 387, 475–490.
- Victora CG, Horta BL, de Mola CL, Quevedo L, Pinheiro RT, Gigante DP, Gonçalves H and Barros FC (2015) Association between breastfeeding and intelligence, educational attainment, and income at 30 years of age: A prospective birth cohort study from Brazil. *The Lancet Global Health* 3, 199–205.
- Whitlock A (2016) Why do health visitors screen mothers and not fathers for depression in the postnatal period? *Journal of Health Visiting* 4, 312–321.
- WHO (1991) Ten steps to successful breastfeeding (1991). <https://www.who.int/activities/promoting-baby-friendly-hospitals/ten-steps-to-successful-breastfeeding>
- WHO (2003) Global Strategy for infant and Young Child Feeding www.who.int/nutrition/topics/global_strategy/en/
- WHO (2020) Global Strategy for infant and Young Child Feeding <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/infant-and-young-child-feeding>
- Wöckel A, Schäfer E, Beggel A and Abou-Dakn M (2007) Getting ready for birth: impending fatherhood. *British Journal of Midwifery* 15, 344–348.
- World Breastfeeding Trends initiative UK report (2016) WBTi UK Report 2016. <https://ukbreastfeeding.org/wbtiuk2016/>
- Wynter K, Di Manno L, Watkins V, Rasmussen B and Macdonald JA (2021) Midwives' experiences of father participation in maternity care at a large metropolitan health service in Australia. *Midwifery*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2021.103046>.
- Xu F, Li Z, Binns C, Bonello M, Austin MP and Sullivan E (2014) Does infant feeding method impact on maternal mental health?. *Breastfeeding Medicine: The Official Journal of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine* 9, 215–221.
- Yale School of Public Health (2020) Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly: A Guide to Global Scale Up. <https://publichealth.yale.edu/bfci/>
- Zakarija-Grković i, Cattaneo A, Bettinelli ME, Pilato C, Vassallo C, Buontempo MB, Gray H, Meynell C, Wise P, Harutyunyan S, Rosin S, Hemmelmayr A, Šniukaitė-Adner D, Arendt M and Gupta A (2020) Are our babies off to a healthy start? The state of implementation of the Global Strategy for infant and young child feeding in Europe. *international Breastfeeding Journal* 15, 51. www.internationalbreastfeedingjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13006-020-00282-z