



Effective Health Care Breastfeeding Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Potential benefits and harms of breastfeeding is important, but other maternal and child health topics have higher priority for limited program resources. No further activity on this topic will be undertaken by the Effective Health Care (EHC) Program.

Topic Description

Nominator: Individual

Nomination Summary: The nominator is interested in the potential benefits and harms of breastfeeding. Their main interest is to see publically available resources reviewed and compared for accuracy.

Staff-Generated PICO:

Population(s): Women and infants, including minority populations

Intervention(s): Breastfeeding

Comparator(s): Alternatives to breastfeeding (e.g., formula feeding and mixed feeding) and various durations of breastfeeding

Outcome(s): Potential harms and benefits, including maternal and infant outcomes

Key Questions from Nominator: 1. For pregnant women and women with infants, how accurate is information on the subject of breastfeeding (e.g., benefits, ease of initiating, continuing, etc.)?

Considerations

- The topic meets EHC Program appropriateness and importance criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- AHRQ addressed the benefits and harms of breastfeeding in a 2007 review titled *Breastfeeding and Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes in Developed Countries* <http://www.ahrq.gov/downloads/pub/evidence/pdf/brfout/brfout.pdf>. Key questions from this review include:
 1. What are the benefits and harms for infants and children in terms of short-term outcomes, such as infectious diseases (including otitis media, diarrhea, and lower respiratory tract infections), sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and infant mortality, and longer term outcomes such as cognitive development, childhood cancer (including leukemia), type I and II diabetes, asthma, atopic

dermatitis, cardiovascular disease (including hypertension), hyperlipidemia, and obesity, compared among those who mostly breastfeed, mostly formula feed, and mixed feed; and how are these outcomes associated with duration of the type of feeding? Do the harms and benefits differ for any specific subpopulations based on socio-demographic factors?

2. What are the benefits and harms on maternal health short-term outcomes, such as postpartum depression and return to pre-pregnancy weight, and long-term outcomes, such as breast cancer, ovarian cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis, compared among breastfeeding, formula feeding, and mixed feeding, and how are these associated with duration of the type of feeding? Do the harms and benefits differ for any specific subpopulations based on socio-demographic factors?
- Due to the existing AHRQ review on this topic and because it is not within the purview of the EHC Program to compare select publically available resources for accuracy, this topic was not prioritized by the EHC Program.