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## Effect of Prenatal and Postnatal Breastfeeding Education on Breastfeeding Duration

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### Background

- The percentage of infants who are breastfed through six months is 57.6%, and the percentage is even lower at 24.9% for infants who are breastfed exclusively through six months (CDC, 2018).
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (2012) recommends “exclusive breastfeeding for about 6 months, followed by continued breastfeeding as complementary foods are introduced, with continuation of breastfeeding for 1 year or longer as mutually desired by mother and infant.”
- Some of the benefits infants may receive include a lowered risk of developing “asthma, obesity, type 2 diabetes, ear and respiratory infections, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and gastrointestinal infections” (CDC, 2019).
- The benefits breastfeeding mothers may gain include a reduced risk of developing “high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, ovarian cancer, and breast cancer” (CDC, 2019).
- In the United States, only 83.2% are ever breastfed and 17.2% of infants receive formula within two days of birth (CDC, 2018).
- Research has found that mothers rarely receive information of breastfeeding during their prenatal visits (Office of the Surgeon General, CDC, Office on Women’s Health, 2011).

### Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antenatal education to increase exclusive breastfeeding (2014)</td>
<td>Level II, randomized control trial explored the effects of antenatal breastfeeding education on the duration and exclusivity of breastfeeding mothers at six weeks, three months, and six months postpartum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antenatal training to improve breastfeeding: a randomised trial (2011)</td>
<td>Level II, randomized control trial examined the relationship between an antenatal training programme and breastfeeding duration, self-efficacy, and breastfeeding problems at 24 weeks gestation, 36 weeks gestation, six weeks postpartum, and one year postpartum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antenatal education and postnatal support strategies for improving rate of exclusive breastfeeding: randomised controlled trial (2007)</td>
<td>Level II, randomized control trial explored the difference between antenatal breastfeeding education, postnatal lactation support, and routine obstetric care to determine their effect on the duration of exclusive breastfeeding rates at two weeks, six weeks, three months, and six months postpartum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The effectiveness of breastfeeding intervention on breastfeeding exclusivity and duration among primiparous mothers in Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia (2016)</td>
<td>Level III, quasi-experimental study explored the effects of prenatal education and additional postnatal breastfeeding education on the duration and exclusivity in breastfeeding mothers at one week, six weeks, four months, and six months postpartum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postnatal breastfeeding education at one week after childbirth: What are the effects? (2017)</td>
<td>Level III, quasi-experimental study examined the effect of postnatal breastfeeding education one week after delivery on “knowledge, attitude, and exclusive breastfeeding practice at six months after childbirth” (Che’ Muda et al., 2017, Abstract section).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postpartum Breastfeeding Promotion and Duration of Exclusive Breastfeeding in Western Nepal (2015)</td>
<td>Level IV, prospective cohort study investigated how postnatal breastfeeding education affects exclusive breastfeeding at 90 to 120 days postpartum and 150 to 180 days postpartum.</td>
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### Conclusions

- Since only one study compared prenatal education to postnatal education and found no significant difference, there is not enough evidence to conclude which type of breastfeeding education is more effective.
- The evidence suggests that postnatal breastfeeding education is more effective than routine prenatal obstetric care at increasing the duration of breastfeeding.
- Lin- Lin Su et al. (2007) suggests that prenatal education has similar effects on breastfeeding duration as postnatal education.

### Application

- Due to the results being inconclusive, nurses researchers can conduct further research to help answer the research question.
- Nurses can implement additional postnatal breastfeeding education in the hospital and during home visits and routine checkups.
- Nurses can create postnatal breastfeeding programs to be implemented in hospitals, birth centers, and clinics.
- Nurses can advocate for mothers of lower socioeconomic status who are at risk for not receiving postnatal breastfeeding education.

This work is not original. This is a systematic review of published research conducted by professionals. Guidance was provided by Stephanie Burkholder, professor of NU307: Evidence-Based Practice Research Methods.