Breastfeeding Among Infants with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome and Mothers Addicted to Narcotics

Landon Bundenthal
Cedarville University, landonbundenthal@cedarville.edu

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# Breastfeeding Among Infants with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome and Mothers Addicted to Narcotics

Landon Bundenthal
Cedarville University School of Nursing

## Patient Care Issue

**Background & Significance**
- 50,000 infants born in the U.S yearly who receive medical treatment for maternal drug use while pregnant[2]
- Breastfeeding associated with decreased maternal use of drugs or alcohol[3]
- Breast milk lessens side effects of drug withdrawal for infant[3]
- Breastfeeding associated with cases of necrotizing enter colitis [5]
- Breastfeeding associated with significant decrease in hospitalization time[3]
- Drug dependent mothers have very low rate of breastfeeding[4]

**Question:** Should mothers who are using opioids or methadone be encouraged to breastfeed?

*P:* Infants with FAS and their mothers

*I:* Care in Postnatal unit and bonding through breastfeeding

*C:* Care in NICU and administering sedatives such as methadone or morphine

**O:** Reduction of hospitalization time and risk for infection for infant as well as decrease in maternal use of harmful substances [7]

## Registered Nurse Interview

- Nurse recommends breastfeeding of infant
- “Bad mother” stigma prevents nurses from encouraging breastfeeding
- Baby’s wellbeing directly correlated to mother’s
- Methadone or drug crossover to breast milk is insignificant [4]
- Opioid dependent mothers can attend free support program through MVH

## Methods

- Databases: Academic Search Premier, CINAHL, MEDLINE, PUBMED
- Key Words: neonatal abstinence syndrome, breastfeeding, methadone
- Inclusion: research on term infants diagnosed with FAS, research on risks and benefits of breastfeeding
- Exclusion: Articles published >5 years ago

## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NICU Care</th>
<th>Postnatal Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer Incidences of Necrotizing Enter colitis</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital Stay Mean of 22 days</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital Stay Mean of 13 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Bonding Encouraged</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Synthesis of Evidence

- Breastfeeding health benefits outweigh risk of drug crossover
- Mothers who breastfeed more likely to resign dangerous lifestyles
- Decreased hospitalization saves money and encourages bonding
- Research indicates Postnatal care and breastfeeding over NICU

## Evidence-Based Practice Recommendations

- Nurses – aware of different options and drug interactions
- Parents – Encouragement and education on options
- Field – agree on definitions[2,3,6,7]
- Field – more research[4]

## Limitations

- Different drugs produce different levels of danger
- Research gathered from various countries
- Low rate of follow up studies on children born with FAS

## References