

Effect of Breastfeeding during Pregnancy on the Occurrence of Miscarriage and Preterm Labour

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Abstract

Background	Many mothers breastfeed their babies while they are pregnant.
Objective	To explore whether breastfeeding during pregnancy increases the risk of miscarriage and preterm births.
Methods	A case-control study conducted in Al-Mawany General Hospital through a period extended from first of September 2011 till the first of September 2012. Two hundred fifteen pregnant women who breastfed during pregnancy and two hundred eighty pregnant who weren't breastfeeding during pregnancy were studied. Demographic data, frequency of miscarriage and preterm deliveries and neonatal birth weight were compared between the two groups. Chi-Square and student <i>t</i> -test were used to compare the result. Significant difference was considered when <i>P</i> value < 0.05.
Result	The frequency of miscarriage among those who breastfed their babies during pregnancy were significantly lower than among those who didn't breastfed during pregnancy, this was unaffected by exclusiveness of breastfeeding, however, there was statistically insignificant difference in the frequency of preterm deliveries and in the birth weight between the two groups.
Conclusions	Breastfeeding doesn't increase the risk of miscarriage or preterm births neither does it affect neonatal birth weight.
Keywords	Miscarriage, breastfeeding, preterm labour, exclusive breastfeeding, non exclusive breastfeeding

Introduction

Breastfeeding is the direct feeding of an infant or young child from female breasts rather than from a bottles⁽¹⁾ has a lot of benefits for the infant with regard to general health, growth and development. It decreases lower respiratory infections, ear infection and necrotizing enterocolitis, the incidence of sudden infant death syndrome, type I and type II diabetes mellitus, allergic disease (atopy); and possibly enhance cognitive development.

Breast milk contains secretory IgA antibodies, which decrease the incidence of gastroenteritis.

Some studies suggest that breastfeeding may decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease in later life, as indicated by lower serum cholesterol in adult women who had been breastfed as infants⁽²⁻⁵⁾.

Breastfeeding has a lot of benefits for the mother including:

- Decreases the risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and endometrial cancer⁽⁶⁻⁹⁾.
- Lactation for at least 2 years reduces risk of coronary heart disease by 23%⁽¹⁰⁾.
- Decrease insulin requirement in diabetic mothers⁽¹¹⁾.
- Lower risk of metabolic syndrome⁽¹²⁾.