The Production of Milk & The Benefits to Both Infants & Mothers

Ravenne Storms

Department of Biology & Wildlife

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Dr. Don Larson

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I will be researching the production of milk and the benefits of breastfeeding to infants and mothers. The course objective my STEAM project will cover is the benefits of breastfeeding to both infants and mothers from the reproductive unit. I chose this topic for my STEAM project because I thought it would be interesting to learn more about breastfeeding and wanted to know more about the benefits of breastfeeding. This paper will go over health benefits of breastfeeding, immune protection, and maternal health outcomes.

Milk production is the normal physiology of lactation that begins earlier than the newborns first latch. The breasts alter in size and shape during the phases of female development. The female's development includes pregnancy and lactation. During pregnancy, stage II of mammogenesis happens primarily in reaction to elevated progesterone levels, the increased volume of breast tissue results from the proliferation of secretory tissue. In the early stages of pregnancy, lobule type three is produced by chronic gonadotropin (Europe PMC, 2016). The recently formed lobules are bigger and have a larger number of epithelial cells. In late pregnancy, the proliferation of new acini is decreased and the lumen becomes distended with secretary material or colostrum. During labor and lactation, there is more growth and differentiation of the lobule are noticed, along with milk production. Lactation continues by the withdrawal of milk and stimulation of the nipple that activates prolactin release from the anterior pituitary gland and oxytocin from the posterior pituitary gland (Europe PMC, 2016). For continuous secretion of milk, the mammary gland must be presented with hormonal signals. Prolactin is a polypeptide hormone integrated by lactotrophic cells in the anterior pituitary (Europe PMC, 2016). Prolactin stimulates mammary gland ductal growth and epithelial cell proliferation and causes milk protein synthesis (Europe PMC, 2016). Draining of the breasts by the infants suckling is very significant. Oxytocin is included in the milk release reflex. Tangible

stimulation of the nipple-areolar complex during nursing obtains afferent signals to the hypothalamus that then sets off the oxytocin release. Oxytocin has some physiological effects that induce a state of calmness and condense stress that can also intensify feelings of affection between the infant and mother, which is a crucial factor in bonding (Europe PMC, 2016).

Some benefits of breastfeeding for infants are the nutrients. Some nutrients include proteins, lipids, carbohydrates, minerals, vitamins, and elements that are crucial to deliver nutritional needs to infants and guarantee normal growth and development (Anatolitou, 2012). The milk from healthy mothers has long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids that are a component of triglycerides and phospholipids that shape complex structures that are vital for metabolism and brain development. One main carbohydrate in human milk is disaccharide lactose (Anatolitou, 2012). Human milk also includes monosaccharide and over 130 different oligosaccharides. Human milk has huge amounts of neutral and acidic oligosaccharides with intricate molecular structures impacting the gut microbiota and the developing immune system. Human milk involves immune related components such as sIgA, leukocytes, lysozyme, lactoferrin, interferon-y, nucleotides, and cytokines (Anatolitou, 2012). Some of the compounds listed above provide passive protection in the gastrointestinal tract and in the upper respiratory tract blocking adherence of pathogens to the mucosa and thus protecting the breastfed infant against invasive infections. Human milk contains fatty acids, enzymes, hormones, growth factors, polyamines and other biologically active compounds which play a consequential role in the health benefits related with breastfeeding (Anatolitou, 2012). The preventative effect on infections is without a doubt the most important health benefit in relation to breastfeeding. The positive effects of breastfeeding on the infant and mother have been detected in both the developed and developing countries. Data shows that breastfeeding can save lives in countries

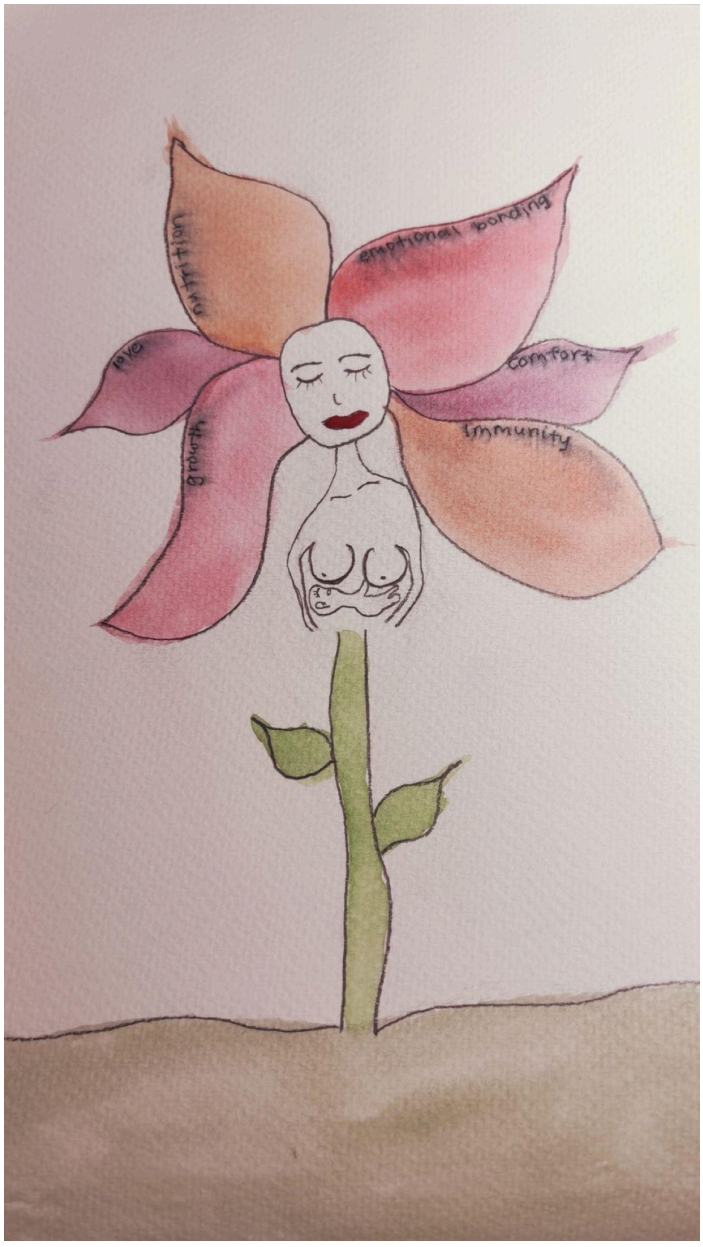
with poor circumstances and hygiene (Anatolitou, 2012). There was an estimate that 1.3 to 1.45 million deaths in 42 high death countries could be prevented by increased levels of breastfeeding (Anatolitou, 2012). Breastfeeding decreases the occurrence and/or severity of a huge range of infectious diseases. The risk of hospitalization for lower respiratory tract infections in the first year is reduced 72% if babies breastfed solely for more than four months (Anatolitou, 2012). The seriousness of respiratory syncytial virus bronchitis is shortened by 74% in infants who breastfed entirely for four months compared to infants who never or partially breastfed (Anatolitou, 2012). According to a meta-analysis that defines breastfeeding and adjusts for confounding variables and other SIDs risks, breastfeeding is associated with a 36% lower risk of SIDs (Anatolitou, 2012).

Some benefits of breastfeeding for mothers are decreased postpartum bleeding and more rapid uterine involution attributable to increased concentrations of oxytocin, reduced menstrual blood loss and increased child spacing attributable lactational amenorrhea, decreased risk of breast cancer, and decreased risk of ovarian cancer (Anatolitou, 2012). Breastfeeding provides significant benefits from women's health such as decreased risks of hip fractures and contribution to the increase of birth spacing (Rea, 2004). Breastfeeding also reduces the risk of data from rheumatoid arthritis. Some other benefits for nursing mothers are faster weight loss that was gained during pregnancy and the reduced postnatal uterine bleeding which leads to less anemia caused by the faster uterus involution caused by the greater oxytocin release. Breastfeeding also lowers the mother's risk of developing type 2 diabetes (Rea, 2004).

In conclusion, milk production and breastfeeding give important nutritional and immunological benefits to infants and also provide physical recovery and health advantages for mothers. For infants, breastmilk gives essential antibodies and a balanced source of nutrition. For

mothers, breastfeeding helps in postpartum weight, releases hormones that elevate maternal bonding, and decreases the risk of ovarian and breast cancer and other health conditions.

For my art part, I drew a mother breastfeeding her infant. The mother is the flower and she is breastfeeding the infant. The petals represent what breastfeeding is like. You get immunity, comfort, emotional bonding, nutrition, love, and growth from breastfeeding.



References

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