Breastfeeding and maternal and infant health outcomes in developed countries

Record Status
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Citation

Authors' objectives
"Objectives: We reviewed the evidence on the effects of breastfeeding on short- and long-term infant and maternal health outcomes in developed countries." (Structured abstract, page v)

Authors' conclusions
A history of breastfeeding is associated with a reduced risk of many diseases in infants and mothers from developed countries. Because almost all the data in this review were gathered from observational studies, one should not infer causality based on these findings. Also, there is a wide range of quality of the body of evidence across different health outcomes. For future studies, clear subject selection criteria and definition of "exclusive breastfeeding", reliable collection of feeding data, controlling for important confounders including child-specific factors, and blinded assessment of the outcome measures will help. Sibling analysis provides a method to control for hereditary and household factors that are important in certain outcomes. In addition, cluster randomized controlled studies on the effectiveness of various breastfeeding promotion interventions will provide further opportunity to investigate any disparity in health outcomes as a result of the intervention.

Project page URL
http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/tp/brfouttp.htm

Indexing Status
Subject indexing assigned by CRD

MeSH
Breast Feeding; Developed Countries

Language Published
English

Country of organisation
United States

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AccessionNumber
32007000496

Date bibliographic record published
