

## Improving Breastfeeding Practices and Infants' Growth through Promoting for "Feed Your Baby like a Baby"

**Authors :** Ammal M. Metwally, Walaa A. Basha, Ghada A. Abdel-Latif, Amira S. El Rifay

**Abstract :** Introduction: Improving breastfeeding practices does not always link to interventions relying on improving nutrition awareness and education alone but needs cultural and behavioral insights. Aim: Our study provided educational intervention through the use of the social marketing (SM) approach, which was respectable to societal norms allowing more conscious choices by mothers to achieve the maximum potential of physical growth of their infants. This study evaluated the effectiveness of the used approach for improving breastfeeding practices and the physical growth of infants aged up to 2 years. Methodology: A quasi-experimental intervention design with a posttest-only control design was done over three years duration to motivate mothers' voluntary behavioral change toward breastfeeding promotion using SM principles: product, price, place, and promotion. The interventions targeted 464 pregnant women in their last trimester, mothers of children up to 2 years, and 1454 women in their childbearing period. Results: Most mothers showed increased awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding and became interested in breastfeeding their children outside the house using the breastfeeding cover (Gawn). Breastfeeding initiation, exclusive breastfeeding under six months, frequency of breastfeeding per day, and percentage of children who continued breastfeeding till two years were significantly increased (from 30%, 23 %, 56%, and 32% to 62 %, 47.3 %, 69 %, and 43.5 %). With the attention of the nutritional educational sessions three or more times, the majority of indicators had the most significant improvement. The females who recorded underweight results over males during the first two years of life significantly improved after the intervention (from 53.8 % to 15.4%, respectively). At the same time, females that were found to be obese before the intervention (7.7 %) became no longer obese. Conclusions: Nutritional interventions that are based on the use SM approach showed improvement for the majority of the key performance indicators. Although they doubled their value before the intervention, the majority were still modest (below 50 %). With sustained use of the SM approach, infants will achieve their maximum potential for physical growth by providing economically disadvantaged mothers with breastfeeding support.

**Keywords :** social marketing approach, early breastfeeding initiation, exclusive breastfeeding, responsiveness to cues of hunger and satiety, physical growth of infants

**Conference Title :** ICNP 2024 : International Conference on Neonatology in Pediatrics

**Conference Location :** Rome, Italy

**Conference Dates :** January 15-16, 2024