



The importance of breastfeeding for seriously ill infants and children

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Abstract

Many infants and children require medical care for acute or chronic illness. Breastfeeding confers multiple benefits to children both in the short and long term. Breastfeeding may shorten the duration and severity of illness and provide important immunological protection to potentially buffer children against hospital acquired infection. Breastfeeding also provides pain relief, comfort, and normality during times of fear, pain, stress and difficulty for families.

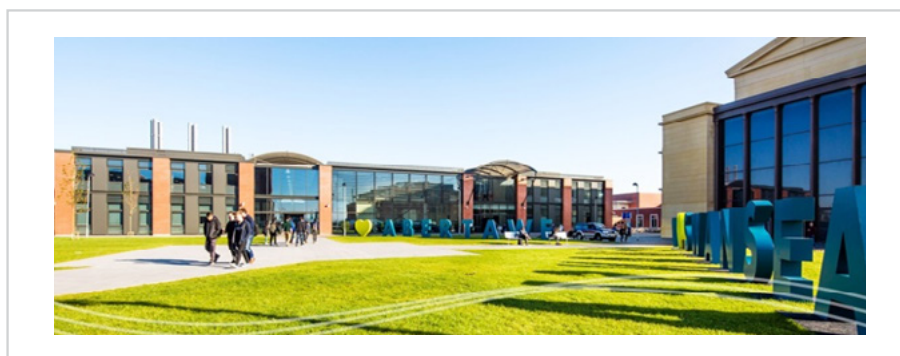
However, maintaining breastfeeding during hospital admission can be challenging, due to institutional barriers, difficulty accessing specialist support, and lack of information and training for health care staff.

While there is robust evidence about the needs of infants born prematurely, and a convincing and well-established acceptance of the importance of breast milk and for critically sick neonates, far less is known about the needs of older infants and children who develop illness or have ongoing health needs beyond the neonatal period.

This presentation will explore the profound ways in which breastfeeding can support sick infants and children alongside medical treatment, introduce a model of collaborative working between medical, nursing and lactation professionals and make recommendations for practical ways in which breastfeeding can be protected, preserved and promoted in the hospital setting.

Biography

Lyndsey Hookway is a London trained pediatric nurse, specialist children's public health nurse, International Board Certified Lactation Consultant, Holistic sleep coach, speaker, and mentor. She is the author of Holistic Sleep Coaching, and her second book is due for publication in late 2020. She is the co-founder and clinical director of the Holistic Sleep Coaching Program, and the founder of the Breastfeeding the Brave project. She works voluntarily and in private practice, and is an active member of a number of current research projects. Her own PhD aims to explore the needs of breastfeeding children with serious illness, as well as the training needs of health care professionals. Lyndsey is a respected international speaker, teacher and mentor. She lives in South West England with her family, including a daughter who is a childhood cancer survivor.



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