



Infant Nutrition Council

Industry supporting both Breastfeeding & Infant Formula

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Postpartum depression and infant feeding

One might expect that there would be a relationship between postpartum depression, a condition more common than usually recognised, and the success of infant feeding, but surprisingly little has been written about it.

A study from Canada has examined the literature on the topic and found some interesting results. 49 studies provided sufficient data to analyse. Not surprisingly, postpartum depression was associated with decreased breastfeeding duration, increased breastfeeding problems, and also some evidence that such women were less likely to start breastfeeding at all, and to do it exclusively.

It is concluded that methods of identifying such depression must be utilised by those dealing with mothers of young infants, and the potential effects on feeding efficacy evaluated.

Comment: *These findings might be thought to be self-evident, but we don't do well enough in identifying and helping women with postpartum depression. Doing so will clearly improve the infant's nutrition as well as helping the mother find a way through the illness.*

Cindy-Lee Dennis, and Karen McQueen: The Relationship Between Infant- Feeding Outcomes and Postpartum Depression: A Qualitative Systematic Review. *Pediat* 2009;123:e736-e751.

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