Breastfeeding in neonates during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic in China: a cross-sectional survey

Zhuxiao Ren¹, Dongchi Zhao², Ming Yi³, Jiayu Miao⁴, J Yang⁴, and Zhichun Feng⁵

¹ Guangdong Women and Children Hospital
² Zhongnan Hospital of Wuhan University
³ Chongqing Three Gorges Center Hospital
⁴ Guangdong Women and Children Hospital
⁵ Bayi Children’s Hospital, Seventh Medical Center of PLA general hospital

June 5, 2020

Abstract

Abstract Objective: To elucidate the current situation of breastfeeding in neonates in China and to investigate whether SARS-CoV-2 is transmitted through the mother’s milk. Design: A nationwide cross-sectional survey Setting: Three hundred and forty-four member hospitals of the Chinese Neonatologist Association network from 31 provinces in China. Sample: Nine hundred and fourteen neonatologists Main outcome measures: These included (1) breastfeeding practices in the obstetrics ward; (2) breastfeeding implementation for neonates admitted to neonatal intensive care unit (NICU); (3) presence of SARS-CoV-2 in the breast milk of COVID-19 positive mothers based on the real-time reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCT) test results. Results: Breastfeeding was undermined during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the 344 hospitals, 153 (44.48%) centers received breast milk from milk banks to feed babies in NICU. Eight (2.33%) Level III centers performed SARS-CoV-2 PCR tests on breast milk from 15 mothers with COVID-19 and found no SARS-CoV-2 RNA presence in breast milk. Moreover, none of the mothers engaged in breastfeeding. Further, only 52 (5.69%) neonatologists supported breastfeeding in mothers with COVID-19. Conclusions: Based on the available evidence, the benefits of breastfeeding for both infants and mothers outweigh the potential risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission through breast milk. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, medical staff should encourage breastfeeding, in keeping with normal infant feeding guidelines, and provide skilled support to all mothers who choose to breastfeed.

Hosted file

Breastfeeding_full_article edited.doc available at https://authorea.com/users/330033/articles/456948-breastfeeding-in-neonates-during-the-coronavirus-disease-2019-pandemic-in-china-a-cross-sectional-survey
Survey results on breastfeeding situation during COVID-19 epidemic

1. Breastfeeding for the babies in obstetric ward.
2. Early skin touch in delivery room during Covid-19 epidemic
3. Early sucking in delivery room during Covid-19 epidemic
4. Special breastfeeding education documents in obstetric ward during Covid-19 epidemic
5. Breast milk bank being in service for receiving mother milk to feed their own infants
6. Kangaroo mother care
7. Breast milk bank being in service for donation
8. Special breast milk donation education documents during Covid-19 epidemic
9. Breast milk bank being in service for receiving human milk from mothers with Covid-19 to feed the infants
10. Being able to perform SARS-CoV-2 PCR tests inside the hospital
11. Performing SARS-CoV-2 PCR tests in breast milk for Covid-19 lactating mothers

Hosted file
Table 1.doc available at https://authorea.com/users/330033/articles/456948-breastfeeding-in-neonates-during-the-coronavirus-disease-2019-pandemic-in-china-a-cross-sectional-survey

Hosted file
Table 2.doc available at https://authorea.com/users/330033/articles/456948-breastfeeding-in-neonates-during-the-coronavirus-disease-2019-pandemic-in-china-a-cross-sectional-survey