



Promoting Breastfeeding in Teenage Mothers: Developmentally Sensitive Education and Support Mechanisms

Karen Wambach

4101 North West 63rd Terrace, Kansas City, MO 64151, USA

kwambach@kumc.edu

Phone: 816 674 3653

Biography

Karen A. Wambach, PhD, RN, IBCLC; Associate Professor, University of Kansas School of Nursing, Kansas City, Kansas, USA; Expertise – nursing education – research methods, theory, and measurement; research in breastfeeding promotion and support in vulnerable populations. Active in ILCA since 1997; currently serving on ILCA Board of Directors as Director of Research and Special Projects (2009-2012).

Short Description of of the lecture

The purposes of the lecture are to: 1) Describe empirical evidence on breastfeeding choice, duration, and experiences among teenage mothers; 2) Demonstrate evidence from clinical trials to design interventions to promote and support breastfeeding in teenage mothers; and 3) Apply research based evidence to formulate practice principles for use with teenage mothers who breastfeed.

Keywords

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood, breastfeeding, clinical trial

Abstract

Although teen pregnancy rates in most European countries are lower than in the United States, pregnancy in this vulnerable population remains an important public health concern. Many health and social issues surround teenage mothers and their infants, including the lower likelihood that they will initiate breastfeeding and if initiated, do so for a shorter time than their adult counterparts. Human milk and breastfeeding can offer teenage mothers' and their infants important protection against some of the common problems seen in this population (e.g. increased infectious disease such as gastroenteritis) and protection against later chronic diseases such as cancer and diabetes. As recognized by the World Health Organization, interventions to promote and support breastfeeding in this vulnerable population are needed. The purpose of this paper is to provide a review of factors of importance in predicting breastfeeding initiation and duration and characteristics of breastfeeding experiences in this population. Recent intervention research to promote and support breastfeeding initiation and duration will also be described. Emphasis will be placed on practice implications for lactation consultants who work with teenage mothers. In addition, suggestions will be presented on school-based support of teens who return to school and continue breastfeeding their infants.