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**Is This Safe? Educating Health Professionals on Medication Safety During Lactation**

Continued breastfeeding is important for mothers and their babies with long term benefits for both. Further benefits include a decreased burden on the health care system and the subsequent decreased public spending. However, health professionals’ knowledge of medication safety during lactation has been shown to be a barrier to breastfeeding initiation and duration.

Conservative, non-individualised, inconsistent, or non-evidence-based information provided by healthcare workers to breastfeeding women has been demonstrated to negatively affect the breastfeeding journey. Inappropriate advice contributes to either the early cessation of breastfeeding or women opting against necessary medical treatment to continue breastfeeding. Specific education for all health professionals will help improve the provision of medication safety information during lactation.

To improve the quality and accuracy of medication information given to breastfeeding women a pilot in-service education program, based in a maternity unit with access for all health professionals, is proposed. A representative group will volunteer to take part in two education sessions during work hours to increase course uptake and to encourage course completion. Education and interprofessional activities will focus on medication safety during lactation for common medications and where to find up-to-date evidence. Pre- and multiple timepoint post- questionnaires will assess the effectiveness of the program as an intervention to improve health professionals’ knowledge, understanding and practice in the short and longer term.

Improving the quality and accuracy of information midwives and other health professionals provide to breastfeeding women will increase confidence in combining necessary medication with lactation, consequently improving both maternal and infant outcomes.

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