

【S1-2】

Significance of the Composition of Breast Milk to the Health and Development of Infants.

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The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that infants be exclusively breastfed until they are 6 months of age. Thereafter, infants should be introduced to complementary foods and breastfeeding continued. In actual practice, however, many countries including Canada and Korea fall far short of this recommendation. Whether, or not, resources should be mobilized to achieve the WHO recommendation is dependent on the strength of the evidence supporting a beneficial impact of breastfeeding. The purpose of this presentation will be to provide a critical assessment of the strength of the research literature supporting a select list of short- and long-term benefits of breast feeding for the healthy term, as well as the premature infant. Short-term benefits to be discussed will include the reduction in the risk of diarrhea, respiratory tract infection and necrotizing enterocolitis. Long-term benefits to be discussed include improved cognitive development and a reduction in obesity, cardiovascular disease, allergy, asthma and celiac disease. An attempt will be made to identify what milk components and/or demographic characteristics of breastfeeding mothers might serve as potential explanations or mechanisms for the observed beneficial outcomes. The focus of this talk will be primarily, but not exclusively, based on research studies conducted on infants in developed countries.