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**FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH  
BREASTFEEDING IN WESTERN OF SAUDI  
ARABIA**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master in Human Nutrition

At Massey University Palmerston North,

New Zealand

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**2014**

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## ABSTRACT

**Background information:** The recommendation for optimal breastfeeding duration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is based firstly on the Quran and then the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendation. The rate of initiation of breastfeeding in Saudi Arabia is over 90%, with the early introduction of infant formula.

**Objective:** To investigate breastfeeding practices at birth and one month postpartum and its association with the BFHI status of the hospital where delivery occurred, and with women's intentions, self-efficacy, knowledge and attitudes, previous experience, support, and discouragement for breastfeeding.

**Study design:** Longitudinal study with data collection at baseline and follow-up at one month postpartum.

**Method:** Women were recruited from two private hospitals in Jeddah, one of these hospitals has baby friendly hospital policies (BFHI). A semi-quantitative questionnaire was used for collecting data by face-to-face interviews with women in the hospital after giving birth and by a phone interview at one month postpartum. SPSS was used for statistical analysis.

**Results:** One hundred and two women completed the baseline survey, and 77 women completed the study at one month (36 from the BFHI and 41 from the non-BFHI). At baseline, 77% women at the BFHI hospital had introduced breast milk as first nutritive substance, while only 7% of women in the non-BFHI

hospital did. However, at one month postpartum, mixed-feeding was the most common feeding method (58%), and there was no difference in feeding method between women in both hospitals. All Egyptian women in the sample (n= 10) were fully breastfeeding at one month, and Saudi women were more likely to use mixed-feeding. Breastfeeding attitudes, self-efficacy, and previous experience were related to breastfeeding practice at one month. Considering all variables, logistic regression found that breastfeeding self-efficacy was the only variable associated with breastfeeding practice at one month, and women with a higher score were more likely to be exclusively, fully, or predominantly breastfeeding at one month ( $p= 0.001$ ).

**Conclusion:** The BFHI was found to be effective in making breast milk the first nutritive substance infants received, and in encouraging early breastfeeding initiation. Breastfeeding self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of breastfeeding intention and practice at one month.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and the foremost I would like to thank Allah for everything he gave to me starting with having the opportunity to continue studying for my Master's degree and being able to successfully complete my thesis.

I also would like to thank my supervisor Dr Janet Weber for her support, advice, and patience with me.

Thanks to my cooperative supervisor, Professor Suhad Bahijri, for helping me get the ethical approval from the Saudi Ethics Committee. Many thanks to my second cooperative supervisor, Dr Muneera Balahmar, for her assistance in getting permission from the Ministry of Health to collect data in Saudi Arabian hospitals, and for her advice and help whenever problems occurred. Thanks and appreciation for Dr Modia Batterjee for her help and advice.

Thanks to Professor Patrick Morel for his kindness and assistance with statistical issues, that drove me crazy.

I really appreciate support from my friends Angela, Belinda, Elizabeth, Rifana, and help from my sister-in-law Huda and cousin Omnia.

I would like to acknowledge King Abdullah, King of Saudi Arabia and the Saudi government for providing me with a scholarship and supporting me financially.

I am so grateful to my parents, who were very supportive and always encouraging me. I love you Mom and Dad.

Special thanks to my brother Mohammad, who made sacrifices for me and came to New Zealand with me and never left me alone.

To my husband, Amjad. I am really glad to have you in my life and no words are enough to explain how much I LOVE YOU. You were very supportive, and were always there whenever I needed you to cheer me up and make me happy.

My mother, father, brothers, and husband, God protect you for me and never deprive me of your presence in my life.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

American Academy of Paediatrics	AAP
Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative	BFHI
Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy Scale	BSES
Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form	BSES-SF
International Medical Centre	IMC
Iowa Infant Feeding Attitude Scale	IIFAS
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	KSA
Ministry of Civil Service	MCS
New Zealand Ministry of Health	NZMOH
Oral Rehydration Salts	ORS
Saudi Arabia Ministry of Health	SAMOH
Saudi Germany hospital	SGH
Soliman Fakeeh	SF
Statistical Package for Social Science	SPSS
Theory of Planned Behaviour	TPB
United Nations Children's Fund	UNICEF
United States of America	USA
World Health Organisation	WHO