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Got milk? : the influence of toddler formula advertising on attitudes and beliefs about infant feeding

Nina J. Berry

University of Wollongong, nberry@uow.edu.au

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School of Health Sciences

Got Milk?

The influence of toddler formula advertising on attitudes and beliefs about infant feeding

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of the

University of Wollongong

by

Nina Jane Berry BA/BEd (Hons) DipArts

2010

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Nina Jane Berry

22nd March 2010

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All I have needed Thy hand hath provided ...

Many thanks are owed:

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Nihil sine labore

Abstract

AIMS This project sought to determine whether advertisements for toddler milk function as de-facto advertising for infant formula in Australia, and whether exposure to these advertisements influences parents' attitudes towards breastfeeding or formula feeding.

DESIGN A mixed methods triangulation model was selected to facilitate thorough investigation of a complex public health issue.

METHODS Four studies were conducted simultaneously and the results synthesised at the level of analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted to examine expectant mothers' understandings of toddler milk advertisements. Content analysis was used to compare the frequency with which advertisements for various formula products and brands appeared in parenting magazines from countries with differing regulations about the marketing of formula milk products. A cross-sectional survey was conducted to investigate the effect of exposure to toddler milk advertising on attitudes and beliefs about breastfeeding and formula feeding. A series of discussion fora were used to investigate the influence of advertising on the infant feeding attitudes and beliefs of parents and those who influence them.

RESULTS Mothers expecting a first baby perceived toddler milk advertisements to be advertising infant formula and found their claims that formula brands can confer health benefits similar to those mothers associate with breastfeeding to be believable. Toddler milk advertisements occurred with greater frequency in Australian parenting magazines than they did in those from the UK, USA or Canada. Exposure to toddler milk advertising is associated with more positive attitudes towards formula feeding amongst parents who are not university educated. In the absence of accurate, evidence-based

information about infant formula, mothers, grandmothers and Child and Family Health Nurses rely on advertising to inform their decisions and advice about infant formula.

CONCLUSIONS The Marketing in Australia of Infant Formula: Manufacturers' and Importers' Agreement is failing to protect consumers from advertising that minimises the important differences between breastmilk/breastfeeding and formula feeding.

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Abbreviations

AAP	American Academy of Pediatrics
AAFP	American Academy of Family Physicians
ACOG	American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology
ADA	American Dietetic Association
APMAIF	Advisory Panel on the Marketing in Australia of Infant Formula
BFHI	Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
EC	European Community
IFMC	Infant formula manufacturing company
IIFAS	Iowa Infant Feeding Attitudes Scale
International Code	The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant resolutions of the World Health Assembly
LRTI	Lower Respiratory Tract Infection
MAIF Agreement	Marketing in Australia of Infant Formula: Manufacturers' and Importers' Agreement
MLR	Multiple Linear Regression
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NHS	National Health Survey
NSW	New South Wales
ORS	Oral Rehydration Solution
PIFSII	Perth Infant Feeding Study II
PHAA	Public Health Association of Australia
PHAP	Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines
QLD	Queensland
RACP	Royal Australasian College of Physicians
RCM	Royal College of Midwives
UK	United Kingdom
UKDoH	United Kingdom Department of Health
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
USDHHS	United States Departments of Health and Human Services
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children

Definitions

Bottle feeding	Infant is fed infant formula from an infant feeding bottle
Exclusive breastfeeding/ Exclusively breastfed	Infant must be fed human milk either from the mother, a wet nurse or a donor directly or from an infant feeding device. Infant may also be fed oral rehydration solution, medicines, vitamins or minerals. Infant must not be fed anything else.
Follow-on formula	A product based on milk or other edible food constituents of animal or plant origin, which is nutritionally adequate to serve as the principal liquid source of nourishment for an infant less than six months old.
Formula milk	Any powdered milk product that shares a brand identity and identical packaging with an infant formula product
Brand extension	The use of an established product's brand identity for a new product in a different product category
Formula product	Any milk product that shares a brand identity with an infant formula product
Full breastfeeding/ Fully breastfed	Infant is fed human milk as the predominant source of nourishment. Infant may also be fed oral rehydration solution, medicines, vitamins or minerals, water based drinks (eg tea) or fruit juice. Infant must not be fed anything else, particularly non-human milk, infant formula or other food-based fluids. This definition includes exclusively breastfed infants.
Formula brand	Brand identifiers that are associated with an infant formula product
Growing up milk	Liquid milk, often fortified, that shares a brand identity with an infant formula product. Represented as suitable for children more than a year old.
Infant	A person less than 12 months old.
Infant formula	A product based on milk or other edible food constituents of animal or plant origin, which is nutritionally adequate to serve as the sole diet of an infant less than six months old.
Line Extension	The use of an established product's brand identity for a new product in the same product category.
Mixed feeding	Infant is fed a combination of human milk (either at the mother's breast or from an infant feeding device) and infant formula. Infant may also be fed other foods and/or fluids.
Product category	A group of products that meet a general need. For example, 'soft drink' and 'infant nutrition' and 'health and beauty' are product categories.
Product line	A set of related products sold by the same company bearing a single brand identity.
Toddler milk	Powdered milk of animal or plant origin, often fortified, that shares a brand identity with infant formula, and is presented in packaging that is identical in size and shape to an infant formula product. Represented as suitable for children more than a year old.