

Breastfeeding Support Program increases the odds to still be breastfeeding (exclusively) at six months



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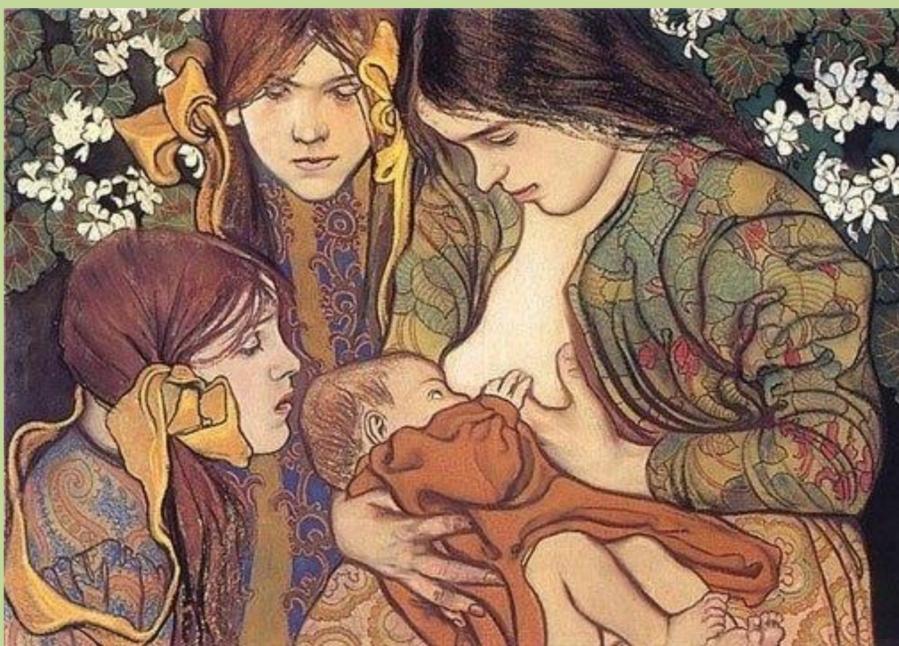
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Background

- Breastfeeding has important long term health consequences for both infants and mothers (Victora et al, 2016).
- In the Netherlands the government advises mothers to breastfeed for six months or longer, but only 51% of Dutch mothers still breastfeed at six months (Peeters, Lanting & Van Wouwe, 2015).
- The present study examined the effectiveness of an existing intervention, the Breastfeeding Support Program (BSP). It was expected that the BSP increases breastfeeding duration and exclusivity* among its participants, when compared to a control group.

* Exclusive breastfeeding is advised by the WHO for the first 6 months of life and is defined as breastfeeding without any other fluids or foods.



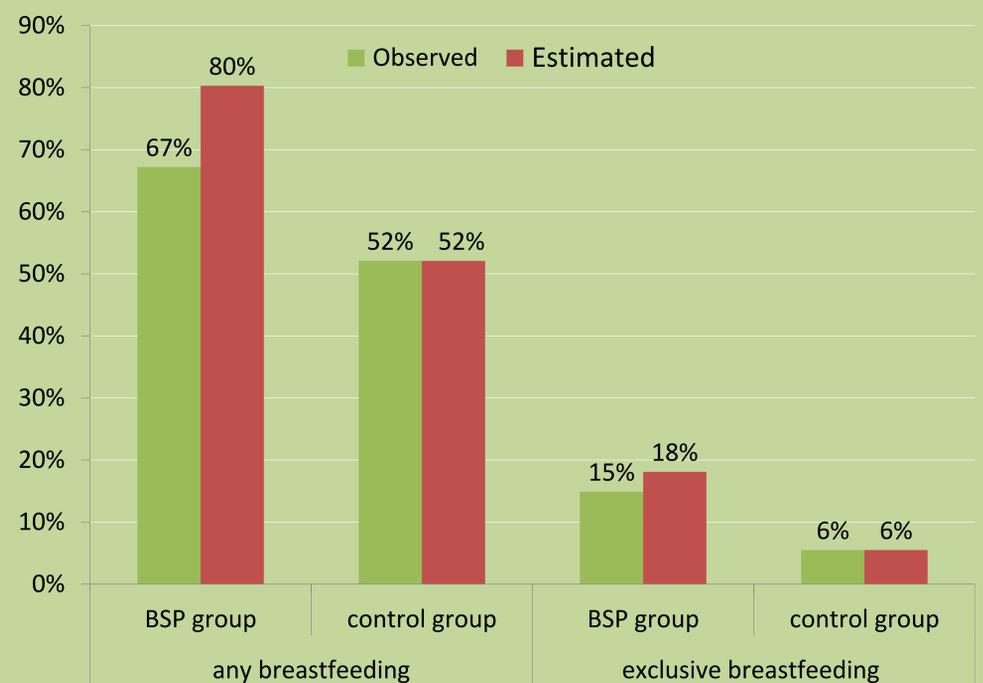
Methods

- Breastfeeding duration in the BSP group (n=67) was compared to a control group (n=73) by means of a quasi-experiment.
- A logistic regression was used to compare the BSP group and the control group on the percentage of women still breastfeeding (exclusively) at 6 months, while controlling for possible confounders.

Results

- The odds to still be breastfeeding and the odds to still be breastfeeding exclusively at six months are both significantly higher for women in the BSP group than in the control group (respectively OR= 3.75, p= .003 [95% CI= 1.59-8.85]) and OR= 3.80, p= .037 [95% CI= 1.08-13.36]).
- Estimated and observed percentages are shown in figure 1. Estimated percentages for any breastfeeding at six months are 80% in the BSP group versus 52% the control group, and for exclusive breastfeeding at six months 18% in the BSP group versus 5.5% the control group.

Figure 1: Observed and estimated percentages for any breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding at 6months, for the BSP group and the control group



Conclusion

- The BSP appears to be effective at increasing breastfeeding duration and exclusivity among its participants.
- Taking into account the important long term health consequences of breastfeeding for infants and mothers, it would be beneficial to make breastfeeding support more affordable.