



■ Editorial

# Breastfeeding Can Reduce the Risk of Developing Diabetes

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See original paper on 273

It is well known that breastfeeding has a positive effect on neonate health, including cognitive development, emotional stability, and growth. Breastfeeding also has important benefits for the health of the mother and may reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and breast and ovarian cancer.<sup>1)</sup>

It has recently been suggested that breastfeeding also reduces the risk of maternal diabetes. The relationship between breastfeeding and maternal diabetes incidence is related to both breastfeeding itself,<sup>2)</sup> and to the duration of breastfeeding.<sup>3)</sup> This association was still positive after adjustment for pre-pregnancy obesity, gestational metabolism, perinatal outcomes, sociodemographic factors, and post-delivery lifestyle behavior.<sup>4)</sup> The results of follow-up for more than 30 years have recently been published, and the duration of breastfeeding and risk of diabetes were significantly associated.<sup>5)</sup>

In the present issue, Kim et al.<sup>6)</sup> evaluated the association between breastfeeding and the prevalence of diabetes in Korean parous women using the 5th–6th Korea National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey data. After adjustment for age, body mass index, education level, income, and other variables, the authors found that the prevalence of diabetes was significantly lower in women who had breastfed than in those who had not, with an odds ratio of 0.534 (95% confidence interval [CI], 0.289–0.976) in women who breastfed for 0–6 months and 0.575 (95% CI, 0.321–0.990) in women who breastfed for 6–12 months. These results are similar to findings in a previous systematic review that reported a lower odds ratio among those subjects who had breastfed (pooled odds ratio, 0.65; 95% CI, 0.49–0.86).<sup>7)</sup>

According to the Korean National Commission for United

Nations International Children's Emergency Fund report on breastfeeding in 2016, 18.3% of Koreans met the World Health Organization recommended full breastfeeding duration of up to 6 months after birth, in contrast to the international average of 40%.<sup>8)</sup> Mothers should be encouraged to exclusively breast-feed all their infants for at least 6 months.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

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