

Breastfeeding: Talk about mother guilt, dummies and SIDS and factors influencing Australian breastfeeding rates

Leading international and local experts will address health professionals on the common themes of guilt, sleep and support at the Australian Breastfeeding Association's 19th annual educational seminars being held in Sydney, Perth and Adelaide in March.

Professor Miriam Lobbok, a leading international public health researcher and public health adviser to bodies such as UNICEF, the US Government and the World Health Organization, will ask why the topic of breastfeeding is so fraught with angst, guilt, shame and aggression.

'The messages about breastfeeding are loaded and mixed. I plan to share some ideas about how to reduce negative feelings which can engender guilt and shame in mothers and how we can empower mothers to feel supported', said Professor Lobbok.

Infant sleep researcher and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) expert, Dr Peter Blair, will give two talks about his latest research into risk factors associated with SIDS, as well as the findings from a long term ongoing study into infant and childhood sleep patterns of 14,000 children. His address, *Bed-sharing and dummies*, will examine the evidence from recent studies on these two issues and the risks of SIDS.

'The debate and the evidence from research studies shows this issue is complex and far from cut and dried, despite the desire of many social commentators to simplify the debate surrounding infant sleep. Many SIDS risks factors are universal such as bed-sharing while under the influence of drugs or alcohol and remain significantly high', said Dr Peter Blair.

'While some countries have promoted strategies to discourage bed-sharing and encourage the use of dummies after breastfeeding is established, the scientific evidence to measure the effectiveness of this strategy is unclear. The evidence on whether the use of a dummy is a preventive measure will be outlined in my presentation at the Breastfeeding Seminars.'

In a long-term ongoing study into infant and childhood sleep patterns of 14,000 children, Dr Blair found that the results challenged common theories on sleep. 'For instance, one piece of data showed that of the infants still breastfeeding at 6 months, 29% of the sample, slept around half an hour less than the rest of the sample, though interestingly, at 30 months, had longer sleep duration', outlined Dr Blair.

Dr Wendy Brodribb, School of Medicine, University of Queensland, Brisbane, will examine why Australian breastfeeding rates halve from initiation rates of 91% to 52% at 6 months of age with 13% of these being exclusively breastfed. The presentation will examine the types of information available to women in Queensland once they leave the hospital environment, whether new mothers can access support services for breastfeeding at the right times and examine what others factors may be influencing these low feeding rates at 6 months of age.



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Lactation Resource Centre

www.lrc.asn.au

Retail Subsidiary

www.mothersdirect.com.au

The seminars will be held in Sydney on 13 March, Adelaide 15 March and Perth 17 March 2012 and be valuable to all health professionals working or studying in the area of human lactation and anyone else with a professional interest in breastfeeding.

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Visit the seminar's website at: www.breastfeedingseminars.asn.au



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Speaker Profiles

Dr Miriam Lobbok is the Director, Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute (dedicated to the '3Bs': birth spacing-birth delay/birth practices/breastfeeding). Previously, she served as the Senior Advisor for Infant and Young Child Feeding & Care, UNICEF HQ; Chief, Maternal Health and Nutrition, USAID; and Director, Breastfeeding and Maternal Health, Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown U; and faculty at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. She is a founder and past president of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine and has served as an expert on US Institute of Medicine, US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, and WHO expert committees.

Dr Peter Blair has a background in Medical Statistics and a particular interest in infant and childhood epidemiology. Born in Manchester, he studied Mathematics (BSc Hons) and Medical Statistics (MSc) before moving to Bristol where he completed his doctorate (Epidemiology of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) in 1997. From his work on several major observational studies he is a recognised expert in the SIDS field and was made an honorary fellow and advisor to UNICEF (UK) in 2009.

Dr Wendy Brodribb is a Senior Lecturer in the Discipline of General Practice, School of Medicine, University of Queensland, Brisbane, and has worked in areas of women's health with a specific interest in lactation for over 20 years. Wendy has a Certificate in Fertility Regulation, is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) and has edited the Australian text *Breastfeeding Management* and written a number of papers on breastfeeding topics.

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