

# The World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi)

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**Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
(HKSAR)**

**China**

**2008 Assessment Report**

**Executive Summary**

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## *Executive Summary*

The World Breastfeeding Trend Initiative (WBTi) is developed by International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) Asia to assess the implementation of the WHO Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. Currently over 50 countries are participating in the project with more expected in the year 2009. Part I of the assessment has five indicators on infant practices while Part II has 10 indicators on policy on programmes. The information collected will be the largest global database on policies and programmes for supporting breastfeeding.

Baby Friendly Initiative Hong Kong Association was invited by IBFAN Asia to co-ordinate the assessment for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The Consumer Council is the supporting organisation in the project. The assessment assists in the identification of gaps and the recommendation of improvement measures. When the exercise is repeated in a few years, the trend and progress made will also be apparent.

Below are the findings for HKSAR:

### **Key Findings on infant feeding trends (Indicator 1 – 5):**

Indicator	Current status
<b>1. Percentage of babies breastfed within one hour of birth</b>	Not available
<b>2. Percentage of babies of 0&lt;6 months of age exclusively breastfed in the last 24 hours</b>	Not available
<b>3. Babies are breastfed for a median duration of how many months</b>	Not available
<b>4. Percentage of breastfed babies less than 6 months old receiving other foods or drink from bottles</b>	Not available
<b>5. Percentage of breastfed babies receiving complementary foods at 6-9 months of age</b>	Not available

### **Indicator 6: National Policy, Programme and Co-ordination**

#### **Gaps:**

- No territory-wide Infant and Young Child Feeding / Breastfeeding Policy, Central Breastfeeding Committee nor Breastfeeding Co-ordinator.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Establish a multisectorial Central Breastfeeding Committee headed by a co-ordinator

- The Committee to formulate the Infant and Young Child Feeding / Breastfeeding Policy for the territory with a plan of action supported by appropriate funding
- The Committee to monitor and evaluate policy implementation

### **Indicator 7: Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding in maternity services)**

#### **Gaps:**

- No hospital in the HKSAR has achieved Baby Friendly status.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Review existing breastfeeding policy of hospitals with maternity units, implementation of the Ten Steps and compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant WHA resolutions
- Hospitals with maternity units to develop strategies to implement the Ten Steps supported by appropriate resources

### **Indicator 8: Implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes**

#### **Gaps:**

- No specific action has been taken to implement the International Code in the entire territory.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Adopt the Code into local legislation or formulate a strong voluntary code with means of monitoring and sanctions for violation
- A Central Breastfeeding Committee to monitor violations and the implementation of sanctions

### **Indicator 9: Maternity Protection**

#### **Gaps:**

- Women in HKSAR are only entitled to 10 weeks maternity leave with no nursing breaks when they return to work.
- No provision for paternity leave by law.
- Health protection for pregnant women but no specific provisions for breastfeeding women.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Ratify International Labour Organization Maternity Protection Convention No.183 and implement Recommendation 191

### **Indicator: 10: Health and Nutrition Care Systems**

#### **Gaps**

- Training in infant and young child feeding / breastfeeding is only a small part of the undergraduate training of medical doctors; content covered is not standardised and differs between the two medical schools in HKSAR
- Training curriculum in this area for nursing students is limited
- Little cross-reference of infant and young child feeding / breastfeeding with other health topics
- Lack of training on infant and young child feeding for paediatricians qualified prior to the community paediatric training programme of 2004
- Lack of training for obstetricians in breastfeeding and awareness of mother-friendly childbirth procedures
- Non-systematic in-service training
- Inadequate provision for mothers staying with ill infants during the infants' hospital stay
- Little provision for infants to stay with their mothers who require hospital admission but are still able to care for their infants.

#### **Recommendations**

- Review the training of all healthcare workers who look after pregnant women, mothers, infants and young children
- Review in-service training in both the public and private sectors and especially doctors with the award of Continued Medical Education, Continued Professional Development points as possible incentive
- Train health care assistants to assist nurses to support mothers to breastfeed
- Incorporate the implementation of the Ten Steps, Mother / Baby Friendly child birth procedures and admission policies, and compliance with the Code and subsequent relevant WHA resolutions in the standards of accreditation of public and private hospitals

#### **Indicator 11: Mother Support and Community Outreach – Community-based Support for the Pregnant and Breastfeeding Mother**

##### **Gaps:**

- Few mothers have access to Peer Support groups prior to discharge from maternity units or in the community
- For non-HKSAR resident mothers, there is little knowledge of the support they receive when pregnant or after delivery.

##### **Recommendations:**

- Make use of community nurses to support mothers to breastfeed in the home setting
- Encourage and support the formation of Peer Support groups for breastfeeding mothers as noted in Step 10 of the Ten Steps
- Seek a better understanding of the breastfeeding education and support available for pregnant women, mothers and infants in mainland China and to set up mechanisms to ensure their access to reliable services in the HKSAR or mainland China.

#### **Indicator 12: Information Support**

##### **Gaps:**

- No Information / Education / Communication (IEC) strategy with piece-meal programmes that may overlap between different organizations or leave gaps unfilled

**Recommendations:**

- Formulate a Breastfeeding / Infant Young Child Feeding policy including IEC strategies
- Establish a Central Breastfeeding Committee with representatives from major government departments and organisations involved in breastfeeding promotion, allocated with appropriate resources, to plan and co-ordinate IEC programmes
- Implement the Code and subsequent relevant WHA Resolutions to minimise the impact of marketing promotions of the industry.

**Indicator 13: Infant Feeding and HIV****Gaps:**

- No infant and young child feeding policy that includes infant feeding and HIV

**Recommendations:**

- Formulate a territory-wide infant and young child feeding policy including infants of HIV positive mothers

**Indicator 14: Feeding during Emergencies****Gaps:**

- No policy on infant and young child feeding that includes infant feeding in emergencies.

**Recommendations:**

- Formulate a policy on infant and young child feeding that includes infant feeding in emergencies

**Indicator 15: Mechanisms of Monitoring and Evaluation System****Gaps:**

- No structured monitoring and evaluation of infant and young child feeding practices

**Recommendations:**

- Establish a Central Breastfeeding Committee and an infant and young child / breastfeeding policy with plans of action accorded appropriate resources, a built-in system of monitoring and evaluation, and the authority to collect data from both the public and private sector
- Collect data according to WHO recommendations in order to facilitate international comparisons
- Conduct periodic territory-wide surveys on breastfeeding through the Census and Statistics Department's household surveys

## Summary part 1: Infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices

IYCF Practice	Result	Score
Indicator 1 Starting Breastfeeding (Initiation)		
Indicator 2 Exclusive Breastfeeding for first 6 months		
Indicator 3 Median duration of Breastfeeding		
Indicator 4 Bottle-feeding		
Indicator 5 Complementary Feeding		
<b>Score Part 1 (Total)</b>		<b>0 / 50</b>

### Guideline:

Scores (Total) Part-I	Colour-rating	Grading	Existing Situation ✓ Check that apply
0 – 15	Red	D	✓
16 – 30	Yellow	C	
31 – 45	Blue	B	
46 – 50	Green	A	

## Summary Part II: IYCF Policies and Programmes

Targets:	Score (Out of 10)
1. National Policy, Programme and Coordination	0
2. Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative	1
3. Implementation of the International Code	0
4. Maternity Protection	2
5. Health and Nutrition Care System	3.5
6. Mother Support and Community Outreach	7
7. Information Support	6
8. Infant Feeding and HIV	4.5
9. Infant Feeding during Emergencies	0
10. Monitoring and Evaluation	3
<b>Score Part 2 (Total)</b>	<b>27 / 100</b>

**IBFAN Asia Guidelines for WBTi**

Total score of infant and young child feeding policies and programmes (indicators 6-15) are calculated out of 100.

Scores	Colour- rating	Grading	Existing Situation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check that apply
0 – 30	Red	D	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
31 – 60	Yellow	C	
61 – 90	Blue	B	
91 – 100	Green	A	

**Total of Part I and Part II (indicator 1-15): IYCF Practices and Policies and Programmes**

Total score of infant and young child feeding practices; policies and programmes (indicators 1-15) are calculated out of 150.

Scores	Colour- rating	Grading	Existing Situation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check that apply
0 – 45	Red	D	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
46 – 90	Yellow	C	
91 – 135	Blue	B	
136 – 150	Green	A	

# *Acronyms*

- BFHI – Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative
- BFHIHKA – Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative Hong Kong Association
- DH – Department of Health, HKSAR
- GSIYCF – Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding
- HKCU – Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF
- HKSAR – Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
- HIV – Human immunodeficiency virus
- IBFAN - International Baby Food Action Network
- IYCF - Infant and Young Child Feeding
- MCHC – Maternal and Child Health Centre
- MDG – United Nations Millennium Development Goals
- TAM - Tracking, Assessing and Monitoring
- UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
- WBTi - World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative
- WHA – World Health Assembly
- WHO – World Health Organization

## *Concluding Remarks and the Way Forward*

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BFHIIHKA appreciates the opportunity to co-ordinate the WBTi assessment so that there can be a baseline database on infant and young child feeding for HKSAR. Although HKSAR is only a special administrative region, being able to use an instrument accepted internationally allows comparison between HKSAR and other countries and regions. The assessment can serve as a basis to monitor progress and effectiveness of interventions.

It is unfortunate that there is no Central Breastfeeding Committee with the authority to collect territory-wide data so that existing data collected on a voluntary basis is incomplete. Since HKSAR has not adopted the WHO's "Infant and Young Child Feeding: A tool for assessing national practices, policies and programmes" on which the WBTi assessment tool is based, there is a lack of all the data required for Part I on infant feeding practices. Without a territory-wide mechanism with the authority to formulate and implement policies, the efforts put in by various parties made slow progress as reflected in Part II on policy and programmes.

HKSAR is in urgent need of a multisectorial Central Breastfeeding Committee headed by a Breastfeeding co-ordinator so that a Breastfeeding policy, plan of action, monitoring and evaluation mechanism can be developed. Appropriate resource allocation and legislative support are needed for the successful the implementation of the plan. Infant and young child feeding has such important life-long implication for the individual and the community that this ought to receive priority attention of the government of HKSAR to ensure a healthy population from birth to adulthood.