

## Prolonged breastfeeding can cause caries



A new study carried out to understand the effect of breastfeeding on children's teeth has found there is a higher risk of dental caries if breastfeeding continues for two years or more.<sup>1</sup>

Due to the known benefits of breastfeeding to children's health, the authors, led by Professor Karen Glazer Peres of the University of Adelaide, say that breastfeeding should not be discouraged but instead, that parents should adopt measures to prevent dental caries as early as possible.

The authors analysed the impact of sugar in the diet and the role of *Streptococcus mutans* (*S. mutans*), the most common bacterium associated with dental caries. They found that breastfeeding after the age of two years remains associated with severe early childhood caries independent of sugar consumption and the presence of *S. mutans*. This is important as previous studies have not examined each potential risk factor in isolation, making it sometimes difficult to establish which factor is causing the decay.

The research involved more than 1,000 children from an area of Southern Brazil

where the water is fluoridated. They were seen several times from the age of three months to five years. Breastfeeding information was collected until the children were aged two and sugar consumption data were collected at ages two, four and five years.

Children who were breastfed for more than two years had a higher number of decayed, missing or filled teeth (dmft) and were at a higher risk of severe early childhood caries (S-ECC) than those breastfed up until the age of one. Further analyses which took into account sugar consumption showed that breastfeeding at two years of age was an independent risk for severe caries.

Professor Karen Glazer Peres, who led the research in Brazil, said: 'Breastfeeding is the unquestioned optimal source of infant nutrition. Dental care providers should encourage mothers to breastfeed and, likewise, advise them on the risk.'

1. Peres K G, Nascimento G G, Peres M A *et al.* Impact of prolonged breastfeeding on dental caries: a population-based birth cohort study. *Pediatrics* 2017; **140**: e20162943.

## BDJ Team now accepts manuscript submissions



*BDJ Team*, the *BDJ* Portfolio's online magazine for the whole dental team, has launched its own manuscript submission site, to encourage original submissions from dental care professionals (DCPs) involved in research.

*BDJ Team* was launched in 2014 and is published ten times a year on a dedicated website and offers DCPs free verifiable continuing professional development (CPD) through the British Dental Association's (BDA's) CPD Hub.

*BDJ Team* publishes a broad spectrum of articles aimed at DCPs, including interviews and features, news, letters, dental product information, and research. Recent original content published on the *BDJ Team* site includes:

- *Treatment of dental caries under general anaesthetic in children* (<http://go.nature.com/2utn3tK>)
- *Paediatric dentistry and the dental team* (<http://go.nature.com/2pO18JE>)
- *Exploring alternative methods of gag reflex control. Part 1: Acupressure* (<http://go.nature.com/2eJUjqW>).

*BDJ Team's* manuscript submission site mirrors those currently used by the *BDJ* and by *BDJ Open*, and enables easy tracking of articles and peer review as required.

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