

Effects of work-related factors on the breastfeeding behavior of working mothers in a Taiwanese semiconductor manufacturer: a cross-sectional survey

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Abstract

Background

In recent years, the creation of supportive environments for encouraging mothers to breastfeed their children has emerged as a key health issue for women and children. The provision of lactation rooms and breast pumping breaks have helped mothers to continue breastfeeding after returning to work, but their effectiveness is uncertain. The aim of this study was to assess the effects of worksite breastfeeding-friendly policies and work-related factors on the behaviour of working mothers.

Methods

This study was conducted at a large Taiwanese semiconductor manufacturer in August-September 2003. Questionnaires were used to collect data on female employees' breastfeeding behaviour, child rearing and work status when raising their most recently born child. A total of 998 valid questionnaires were collected, giving a response rate of 75.3%.

Results

The results showed that 66.9% of survey respondents breastfed initially during their maternity leave, which averaged 56 days. Despite the provision of lactation rooms and breast pumping breaks, only 10.6% mothers continued to breastfeed after returning to work, primarily office workers and those who were aware of their company's breastfeeding-friendly policies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, breastfeeding-friendly policies can significantly affect breastfeeding behaviour. However, an unfavourable working environment, especially for fab workers, can make it difficult to implement breastfeeding measures. With health professionals emphasizing that the importance of breastfeeding for infant health, and as only females can perform lactation, it is vital that women's work "productive role" and family "reproductive role" be respected and accommodated by society.