



Breastfeeding as a means to prevent infant morbidity and mortality in Aboriginal Canadians: A population prevented fraction analysis.

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Abstract: Canadian Aboriginal infants experience poor health compared with other Canadian infants. Breastfeeding protects against many infant infections that Canadian Aboriginals disproportionately experience. The objective of our research was to estimate the proportion of select infant infection and mortality outcomes that could be prevented if all Canadian Aboriginal infants were breastfed.

We used Levin's formula to estimate the proportion of three infectious outcomes and one mortality outcome that could be prevented in infancy by breastfeeding. Estimates were calculated for First Nations (both on- and off-reserve), Mā̃tis and Inuit as well as all Canadian infants for comparison. We extracted prevalence estimates of breastfeeding practices from national population-based surveys. We extracted relative risk estimates from published meta-analyses.

Between 5.1% and 10.6% of otitis media, 24.3% and 41.4% of gastrointestinal infection, 13.8% and 26.1% of hospitalizations from lower respiratory tract infections, and 12.9% and 24.6% of sudden infant death could be prevented in Aboriginal infants if they received any breastfeeding.

Interventions that promote, protect and support breastfeeding may prevent a substantial proportion of infection and mortality in Canadian Aboriginal infants.

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