Cytokines, Infections, Stress, and Dysphoric Moods in Breastfeeders and Formula Feeders.

- Groer MW,
- Davis MW.

Maureen W. Groer, RN, PhD, FAAN, is the Gordon Keller Professor in the University of South Florida College of Nursing, Tampa.

Objective: To analyze relationships between stress, moods, and immunity in breastfeeding compared to formula-feeding mothers. Design: A cross-sectional study of 181 healthy mothers, exclusively breastfeeding or formula feeding, studied at 4 to 6 weeks after childbirth. Setting: Mothers were recruited in the postpartum unit of the hospital and then visited in their homes once at 4 to 6 weeks after childbirth for data collection. Main Outcome Measures: Stress, mood, infection symptoms, and serum levels of interferon-gamma and interleukin-10 were measured. Results: Formula-feeding mothers had evidence of decreased interferon-gamma and a decreased serum Th1/Th2 ratio (interferon-gamma/interleukin-10) when perceived stress, dysphoric moods, and negative life events were high, an effect consistent with depression of cellular immunity. However, women who were breastfeeding did not show these relationships. Conclusions: The data suggest that breastfeeding confers some psychoneuroimmunological benefit to mothers, perhaps through prolactin or hypothalamic-hypophyseal-adrenocortical axis stress refractoriness. JOGNN, 35, 599-607; 2006. DOI: 10.1111/J.1552-6909.2006.00083.x (c) 2006, AWHONN, the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses.

PMID: 16958715 [PubMed - in process]

Related Links
- Randomized controlled trial to determine effects of prenatal breastfeeding workshop on maternal breastfeeding self-efficacy and breastfeeding duration. [J Obstet Gynecol Neonatal Nurs. 2006]
- Breastfeeding in Bristol: teaching good positioning, and support from fathers and families. [Midwifery. 2002]

See all Related Articles...