

# Inside ABM



Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Newsletter  
2023

July

*A newsletter offering for Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine members and colleagues from across the world.*

## Welcome to Inside ABM! Come on in!

Welcome to Issue #4 of **Inside ABM**, our way of communicating with ABM members, future ABM members, supporters, and friends about exciting things happening in our organization and in the field of Breastfeeding Medicine. **If you have ideas for items to include in future issues and/or are interested in being a part of the newsletter team, please reach out to [abm@bfmed.org](mailto:abm@bfmed.org).**

## ABM Updates



**Celebrate World Breastfeeding Week!  
Register for ABM's Live Webinar on  
August 2: Mastitis Spectrum Clinical  
Cases**

ABM is pleased to join the **World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)** as it hosts #WorldBreastfeedingWeek each year from August 1st to August 7th to inform, anchor, engage, and galvanize action on breastfeeding and related issues.

### **ABM Webinar:**

Join your colleagues on **Wednesday, August 2, at 4:00-5:30 pm Central Time (USA)** for a live 90-minute webinar: **Mastitis Spectrum Clinical Cases**

- **Register today** for this 90-minute webinar on the topic of mastitis spectrum clinical cases. In the revised Protocol #36, “The Mastitis Spectrum,” some new ideas about the Etiology, Pathology and Therapy of Mastitis and mastitis-related entities were introduced. Three expert members of ABM from around the world with different backgrounds, **Dr. Pamela Douglas (Australia), Dr. Anne Eglash (USA) and Dr. Mónica Pina (Portugal)**, will discuss the implications of this Protocol by talking about some clinical cases they treated in their own Breastfeeding Medicine Practice and answer some of your questions.
- If you are unable to attend the live event, a recording of the webinar will be available later in the ABM Education Center.
- Registration is \$15 for ABM members; and \$25 for nonmembers.

Learn more about other #WorldBreastfeedingWeek activities [here](#).

## Now Available: New Parent Handout Based on Popular Mastitis Protocol

The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine is proud to provide a parent handout with essential, evidence-based information about mastitis written for the public from our popular Mastitis [Protocol](#). A free downloadable PDF is available [here](#). High-quality posters and tear-off sheets are also available for purchase [here](#).

Give your patients and colleagues the latest evidence-based information on treatment and prevention of mastitis and related conditions from the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine.



**Explore the Education Sessions at #ABM2023 and Register Today!**

The ABM Annual Planning Committee has created an unique program with several learning formats. Plan to come early and take one or more of the preconferences, and then learn from invited faculty, attend podium presentations, workshops, and panel discussions. Begin exploring the [schedule](#) and [register](#) today!

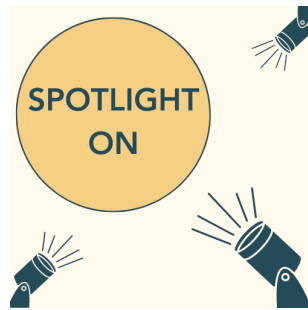


**Have You Signed Up for ABM's Newest Benefit?**

ABM introduced eight Special Interest Groups (SIGs) this year. If you haven't joined one yet, visit the SIG [page](#) for more information. Please note that you have to join the SIG through log in to the “Member Login” from the ABM website [homepage](#) and view the Members dropdown, click on “My

Profile" and then select the SIGs of your choice. SIG selections will be added every Monday to [MyABM](#), the home for SIG activity. **Also, don't forget to set your notifications in MyABM by going into "Edit Your Profile" in the top right-hand corner of any MyABM page to get realtime, daily, or weekly notifications and never miss a post!**

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## Literature: Associations Between Breastfeeding and Post-perinatal Infant Deaths in the U.S.

This month we are featuring the article entitled: **Associations Between Breastfeeding and Post-perinatal Infant Deaths in the U.S.** by ABM member **Julie Ware, MD MPH**, and colleagues. In the world of science, numbers matter. How about 9,711,567! Dr. Ware and her colleagues analyzed US birth certificates from over 9 million US births from the years 2016-2018, cross-referencing with 20,632 infant deaths in the same time period. The cohort analysis exposed an association between breastfeeding and improved infant survival that is quite striking.

**Citation:**

Ware, J. L., Li, R., Chen, A., Nelson, J. M., Kmet, J. M., Parks, S. E., Morrow, A. L., Chen, J., & Perrine, C. G. (2023). Associations Between Breastfeeding and Post-perinatal Infant Deaths in the U.S. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

[https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(23\)00239-8/fulltext](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(23)00239-8/fulltext) (This link to the full article is good for 30 days)

For greater insight we connected with the esteemed lead author Julie Ware, MD MPH, **In the Author's Own Words...**

### In the author's own words...

**The association between breastfeeding and infant survival has been explored in the literature. What does this study add to the discussion and data?**

In developing countries, the association between breastfeeding and reduced infant mortality has long been noted. Only recently have there been studies documenting that the association also exists in the US, even with good hygiene, safe water, improved access to care, etc. However, this is the first time that the analysis has been conducted at the state and regional level.

**How did you come up with the idea to use the birth certificate data?**

When I moved to Memphis, Tennessee, in 2004, I was overwhelmed with the extremely high infant mortality rate, especially in the African American population. In addition, through breastfeeding outreach into the community, I was seeing very low breastfeeding rates, especially in areas of poverty, and only ~30% of African American mothers in

Memphis initiated breastfeeding in 2004, which coincidentally was when Tennessee adopted the birth certificate requiring completion of the field for breastfeeding initiation. Working closely with our epidemiologist at the Shelby County Department of Health, we found that as breastfeeding rates improved over the next decade through many initiatives to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding, there was a similar and very notable decrease in infant mortality - hence our analysis of birth-death linked data on 148,679 live births and 598 infant deaths over an 11 year period. We found a 19% reduction in post-perinatal infant mortality, similar to the previous work of Chen & Rogan, who found a 21% reduction for post-neonatal deaths from a 1988 survey.

Our CDC colleagues were interested in our local work, as by 2016, all states in the US had adopted the birth certificate revision that includes breastfeeding initiation. The National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) led by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is a census of all live births and deaths derived from the Standard Certificates for Live Birth and Death, and they also examine trends by maternal and infant characteristics, such as maternal age, race, ethnicity, etc., but not breastfeeding. We wanted to expand our analysis beyond Shelby County, Tennessee to the whole US, and the CDC agreed to help with the national dataset.

In Memphis, we saw a wonderful synergy develop between our infant mortality reduction initiatives and breastfeeding promotion and support efforts. This collaboration was not happening everywhere across the US, so the idea for state and regional analyses was born to see if these associations are prevalent throughout, and to assist states and regions in adding breastfeeding promotion, protection, and support to their infant mortality initiatives. This new study analyzes the data by state and region and over a 3-year time period, so almost 10 million babies are included.

### **How could this study be helpful to our international colleagues?**

Although this study is focused on US infants, it confirms what our low and middle income country (LMIC) colleagues have known for a long time. These findings can help all countries advocate to bring breastfeeding promotion and support into infant mortality reduction initiatives.

### **You write that this study provides an correlation between breastfeeding and infant survival. How is this different than a CAUSAL association with infant survival?**

To prove causation in the most rigorous way, a randomized controlled trial needs to be undertaken, controlling for all variables beyond the planned intervention. It would be unethical to randomize babies to breastfeed or not

breastfeed, and follow the mortality rate for one year, so we are left with observational studies. However, the association we found between breastfeeding initiation and lower post-perinatal mortality was present across all the US regions, so the findings are compelling.

**This is the second article that you have stewarded that leverages US birth certificate data to link breastfeeding to improved infant outcomes. Do you have plans for further study? (We have included the citation for the first paper below for our readers as well)**

I am very interested in examining the data when California and Michigan are included in the CDC data set, and want to look at our US territories as well. I am especially interested in linking breastfeeding duration data to mortality when that becomes possible. A deep dive into specific causes of death with relation to breastfeeding would also be of interest. I believe we have only started to understand the association between breastfeeding and infant mortality reduction. Our CDC colleagues are very busy preparing National Breastfeeding Month data for the whole US. I am so thankful that they have been interested in conducting these analyses, which take a lot of time and energy on their part, in the midst of all the many tasks they accomplish for our country.

**Citation:** Li, R., Ware, J., Chen, A., Nelson, J. M., Kmet, J. M., Parks, S. E., Morrow, A. L., Chen, J., & Perrine, C. G. (2022). Breastfeeding and post-perinatal infant deaths in the United States, A national prospective cohort analysis. *The Lancet Regional Health - Americas*, 5, 100094. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lana.2021.100094>

### ***Getting to Know the Panelist***

**Which do you prefer on vacation? ...Exploring the city? or ...Relaxing on the beach?**

Vacations – well I love them! I love to see beautiful parts of the world we live in – whether that is a sunset at the beach, a double rainbow at Victoria Falls, lavender fields in Provence, or a recent excursion to the Cliffs of Moher in Ireland. I've been very blessed to visit many areas of the world, most recently with our EABM friends in beautiful Croatia!

**What's one thing that helps you fall asleep at night?**

The thing that helps me sleep at night is knowing that my family is safe and remembering that God is in control. My son and daughter-in-law are in Ukraine and I worry for them and the entire country every day. I'm also thankful for my supportive husband who helps me hold it together always, and especially when life seems to be unraveling.

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This analysis of birth/death linked data examining the exposure of breastfeeding initiation as noted on the birth certificate with outcome of post-perinatal death (>7 days – 364 days) provides evidence for what type of relationship?

- a. Casual
- b. Regressional
- c. Hypothetical
- d. Correlational

**Answer at bottom of newsletter**



## Have You Seen This?

**Baby-Friendly USA has published 2 recent articles in the last couple months headlined by ABM members.**

1. What SHOULD Happen With Rooming In? **Lori Feldman-Winter, MD MPH FABM**
2. What SHOULD Happen When a Mother Who Planned to Breastfeed Asks for Formula? **Paula Kay Schreck, MD IBCLC FABM**

The articles, published on June 22 and July 10 can be found on the BFUSA website in the “What’s New” section, linked [HERE](#).

The articles focus on responses related to very common scenarios that arise every day in US hospitals. The two articles take the high road on addressing confusion/misinformation regarding Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative practices in the US that have been known to pop up in the media. The content clarifies for hospitals and the public as to how these practices SHOULD be implemented. According to Eileen FitzPatrick, CEO of BFUSA, the feedback from BFUSA-engaged hospitals has been very positive. Due to the success of the articles so far, BFUSA will be doing additional “What SHOULD Happen” features for the BFUSA newsletter and website. Stay tuned!

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## ABM President's Column



## President's Column

### Doing Away with “Shoulds” and Asking Curious Questions

Ann Kellams, MD FABM 17 July 2023

Increasingly, external pressures push us all to “do more,” “be safer,” “eat healthier,” “work harder,” “save more,” “conserve energy,” “explore more,” “listen well,” “speak louder,” “look better,” “exercise more,” and the list goes on...Instead of surrounding the new family with unconditional love and support and resources, we are placing even more than normal, in fact, quite unrealistic expectations on them at a time when their entire world has been transformed. They are, in turn, placing pressure on themselves to do everything “right.” [Read more.](#)

## Not an ABM Member? If you are passionate about breastfeeding, then ABM is for YOU!

Be part of a global, multidisciplinary community and enjoy these [member benefits](#). Join and take advantage of member registration rates for the Annual International Meeting.

Join Today!

## Question of the Month Answer:

The analysis of the US birth certificate data and breastfeeding initiation provides evidence for what type of relationship between the variables? ANSWER: d. Correlational



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