Improving Exclusive Breastfeeding by Changing Hospital Practices

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**Background**

"Breastfeeding" has been defined as "nursing or feeding of a child in the mother's breast with the mother present." (Lien, 1977)

"The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding" was developed by WHO and UNICEF to ensure standardization and quality care. (WHO, UNICEF, 2009)

**Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to improve morbidity outcomes by using exclusive breastfeeding, which showed an additional benefit by improving patient satisfaction. The project was targeted at the newborn nursery and NICU nurses and staff to improve the breastfeeding rate. This summary has been focused on the process breastfed newborns, which have been shown to have a better health status for their community and patient populations.

**WHO/UNICEF 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding**

1. Have a breastfeeding policy that is nourishing for both staff and mothers.
2. Have a dedicated breastfeeding coordinator.
3. Document the purposes and procedures for breastfeeding.
4. Have a patient-focused approach to breastfeeding.
5. Have a support network that breastfeeds only if support needed.
6. Have system-wide, consistent breastfeeding education.
7. Have a breastfeeding registry that includes breastfeeding success statistics.
8. Have a nursery with a patient-focused breastfeeding policy.
9. Have a system-wide, consistent breastfeeding education.
10. Have a culture that encourages breastfeeding to be a normal part of hospital life.

**Methods**

- Developed a 10-step checklist focused on the best practices.
- Developed a computerized tracking system to facilitate tracking and monitoring.
- Developed a continuous feedback loop for continuous improvement.
- Developed a support system for breastfeeding.

**Results**

- Skin to Skin: 3.21 days to live birth - improving the rate at age 11
- Initial Newborn Assessment at Mother's Bedside: 11.4 days to live birth - improving the rate at age 11
- Breastfeeding: 0.4 days to live birth - improving the rate at age 11

**Leadership Journey**

**MODEL THE WAY**

- Developed a successful leadership strategy.
- Developed a motivational plan based on the best practices for successful breastfeeding.

**INSPIRE A SHARED VISION**

- Developed strategies for quality improvement through self-reflection, audit processes, and team support to improve quality and efficiency.
- "I'm out of that exploration that is making change, not talking about it."
- Inspired another for BLW and CLC certifications.

**CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO**

- Improved the patient experience.
- Improved the breastfeeding program for all.
- More staff collaboration from the facility to the women's center.
- Enhanced maternal neonatal leadership.
- Enhanced personal service projects.

**ENCOURAGE THE HEART**

- Shared success stories.
- Thanked and recognized.

**Conclusions**

The authors would like to thank the nursing staff at Methodist La Salle Germantown Hospital for their contribution to this project.

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**References**

[Links to references and sources]

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[Image of process flowchart and data graphs]