Breastfeeding Best Practice -“Got Breastmilk?”
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Problem:
The curriculum of medical schools and schools of nursing include very little information about breastfeeding in their obstetrics courses. Over the years, many nurses and physicians have based their patient education about breastfeeding on their own personal experience with it. Inconsistent and inaccurate information was being shared with patients.

Evidence:
Increasing levels of frustration were felt and reported by patients, maternity nurses, and pediatricians. The level of staff and provider support for patients wanting to breastfeed was inconsistent. Statewide rankings reported the number of patients at our facility that continued to breastfeed after hospital discharge dropped between 2005 and 2007.

Strategy:
A task force was formed that included staff nurses, a lactation consultant, nurse midwife, OB Assistant Manager and OB Unit Educator. The objective was to develop a protocol based on current practice standards identified through research.

Practice Change:
A breastfeeding protocol was developed based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, CDC, and WHO initiative Healthy People 2010. The Maternity Unit staff nurses all received 3 hours of initial education regarding the new protocol. Breastfeeding education is now one of the yearly unit competencies.

Evaluation:
Twelve months after the initial education, the nursing staff was given a case study and content questions to answer. The results indicated that the staff retained the information presented to them in the initial classes and were supporting breastfeeding according to the new protocol.

Results:
Two new questions have recently been added to the “Follow-up Phone call” survey that the patients receive 2 weeks after discharge. The questions address if the patient received the support needed while in the hospital, and is continuing breastfeeding. Preliminary results indicate a positive trend with 90% of new mothers continuing to breastfeed at 2 weeks post discharge.

Recommendations:
The task force recommended two additional changes to take place within the Maternity Unit: an inpatient breastfeeding class; and printed teaching material that reflects the new protocol.
References:


Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses, Evidence-Based Clinical Practical Guideline, Breastfeeding Support: Prenatal Care Through the First Year, (2) (2007).

