

Breast Feeding during Emergencies – Role of Media

**International breast feeding week
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Dr Sudarshini Fernandopulle (MBBS, MSc, MD)



Un-Controlled Donations



Large supply of infant formula at homes,
health centers & distribution points



Maliban donates infant milk food for tsunami victims

Maliban in collaboration with the government of Sri Lanka has once again provided assistance to the children of tsunami survivors, by making a contribution of infant milk powder to the value of Rs. 20 million. The donation was handed over... at the President's House.

Source: Daily News, Sri Lanka. Indian Ocean Tsunami, Sri Lanka, 2004/5





“We distributed children's clothes and about 40 mothers showed up with their babies, we...taught them how to use the milk powder we had received in big quantities.”

Source: Real Medicine Foundation News. Sri Lanka, Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004/5



Ms. Gal Lusky, Head of the Israeli Delegation to Sri Lanka, teaches mothers how to use substituted infant formula (Source IsraAID, January 2005)

“A delegation has begun teaching mothers how to properly use infant formula to feed their children. As a result of the Tsunami many women were traumatised and no longer able to properly breastfeed. Over 60 mothers brought their children aged ½ year to 3, to the camp. They wished to learn how to properly maintain hygiene while feeding their children with the infant formula provided by our feeding centre. Word has spread, and every day new parents arrive.”

Source: IsraAID Press release. Sri Lanka, Indian Ocean Tsunami, 2004/05.

Individuals

“She...gets details of the number of families at each camp so she can supply...milk formula to babies. ‘At the moment some babies are being given the wrong formula and the mothers don’t know how to use it. It’s a little bit disorganised”

Source: Sydney Morning Herald, Australia. Indian Ocean Tsunami, Sri Lanka, 2004/5.





Tsunami Victims Relief in Sri Lanka

Please donate urgently for the one million+ Tsunami victims who have lost everything and need your help immediately to survive.

Critically urgent supplies eg. **Infant formula and feeding bottles** and medical supplies will be airlifted...The remainder will be shipped in 40 foot container and arrive in Sri Lanka in approximately 21 days.

Source: McGill Tribune, Canada. Indian Ocean Tsunami, Sri Lanka, 2004/5

X Wrong messages in the media

- X Infant formula saves babies
- X Infant formula donations are needed
- X Breastfeeding is fragile and unreliable

X Infant formula is needed



Source: Real Medicine. Indian Ocean Tsunami, Sri Lanka 2004/5

X Breastfeeding is fragile and unreliable

Wave of sorrow and joy: twins ripped from mum's arms but one survives

WHEN the terrifying tsunami came pounding ...Kamisem clung on to her three-week-old twins as tightly as she could. But the sheer force of the killer wave ripped her babies out of her arms and into the water. Amazingly, her tiny son Rizki was found alive one hour later ... The young couple are overjoyed at their son's survival, while deeply distressed about their daughter's death... Yesterday they were in the small, ill-equipped clinic ... trying to feed the listless little boy with bread dipped in milk formula. Kamisem's breast milk has dried up -- caused, she said, by the stress she has been under.

Source: Daily Telegraph, Australia. Java Tsunami, Indonesia, 2006.





Breastfeeding is fragile and unreliable

Marooned People Cry for Drinking Water

Women and children are bearing the brunt of this crisis as many mothers cannot breastfeed their children.

Syeda Begum, 20, one of over 12,000 people who took shelter on Ranigram embankment... said she could not breastfeed her three-month-old boy, as she had nothing to eat for a day.

Source: Daily Star, Bangladesh. Cyclone Sidr, 2007.

Role of media

- Educate public on how to promote, protect and support Breast Feeding in emergencies since this is the surest way of protecting infants in emergencies.
- Educate public on how donations can do more harm than good
- Publish positive stories illustrating the importance of BF as a life saving measure
- Address myths

✓ How to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in emergencies

■ Disseminate correct information:

- Emphasize that breast milk is best in emergencies.
- Actively campaign on the need to support women to breastfeed as this is the surest way to protect infants in emergencies
- Women physical and emotionally stressed can produce enough milk for their babies

- Campaign for peer support programmes to support BF mothers
- Disseminate information on possibility for relactation for those mothers who have weaned off the breast and where to obtain such services (MOH)

✓ Educate public on how donations can do more harm than good

- Do not appeal for donations of formula and bottles through media
- No need for large scale donations of milk powder, bottles and teats in an emergency
- Indiscriminate use of formula in emergencies is extremely dangerous for babies as it could result in illness and death
- Public to be aware and report such distributions by aid agencies to MOH of area

Highlighting risks of infant formula



Source: ACT News. Nias earthquake, Indonesia, 2005

Children without mothers or unable to breast feed

- Possibility of using a surrogate mother to breast feed during emergencies
- Using a cup to feed
- To contact MOH of the area for assistance

✓ Address on myths

- Malnourished mothers cannot breast feed
- Stress dries up milk
- ***Large amounts of donated infant formula are required in emergencies and therefore large scale media campaigning for Infant formula***
- ***Infant formula is safe and is the best food for babies if it can be afforded***

✓ Good media coverage for positive stories



Mother breastfeeds her 2 year old son in Aceh after the Tsunami
Source: Yahoo News. Indian Ocean Tsunami, Indonesia

✓ Promote breastfeeding support



In times of disaster, when clean water can be scarce, breastfeeding protects infants from disease.

Source: UNICEF. Yogyakarta Earthquake, 2006.

Campaign on

need to provide extra care for lactating women

- Extra food
- Food supplementation
- Micronutrient supplementation
- Family support
- Psycho-social support
- Family Planning

- Establishment of
 - tents for breast feeding
 - Mother support groups
- Priority in receiving food
- Priority and adequate water
- Priority to use toilets and bathing



■ **THANK
YOU**