Materials Used to Educate Women in Irish Maternity Hospitals: Survey Findings

As their joint BFHI Action Project in 2010, the Regional Maternity Hospital Limerick and Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe, sought to establish what materials are used to provide information to pregnant and postnatal women. A written questionnaire was sent to the CMS Breastfeeding or similar person in all twenty Irish maternity units/ hospitals in June 2010 with 15 units (75%) replying.

Sources of information
All 15 use HSE Material, BFHI Links and material from LLL and Cuidiu, distributed by staff and some on display racks. All print some material, 2 are supported by advertising. (1 stated "Code Compliant")

Web sites given to mothers: BFHI website 7 HSE website 11 LLL and Cuidiu websites 9
Other sites listed: ALCI, Dr. Jack Newman, Kellymom

Commercially supported
None use material produced by bottle, teat or soother manufacturers.
14 do not use material produced by infant formula or food company, 1 does in nicu.
10 use material produced by pump companies.
3 use materials on cups, spoons, feeder mugs, 2 of these only in nicu.
1 occasionally uses materials from commercial companies or shops, 12 do not.
7 use pregnancy/mother baby magazine. 14 have contracts with commercial companies providing a pack and no hospital has a contract with more than one company. 13 -“EU mom pack” 1- “Big baby”

Reviewing of commercial material
When: Prior to use in hospital; yes:10 no: 2 didn’t reply: 3.
After material delivered to hospital: yes: 5 no: 3 didn’t reply: 7
Further reviews: yes: 3 routinely, 4 randomly; no or didn’t reply: 8
By whom: 7- CMS Lactation/parent-education team, 3- midwifery management, 1-baby friendly group.

What are hospitals printing themselves
Ante natal class information Pain Relief
Breastfeeding twins Rooming in
20 good reasons for breastfeeding Skin to skin
Chart for recording milk expressed
Infant feeding
Sterilising feeding equipment
Post natal care
Post natal support
Guidelines for expressing, storing, transporting milk
Physiotherapy and Dietician advice

Being developed by individual hospitals
(9 units replied, but 3 didn’t specify the topics)
Breast care following death of baby.(1)
Flagging system for infant weight loss.(1)
Bottle feeding booklet(1)
Rhesus negative information leaflets(1)
Hospital info booklets, including services provided (5)
Maternity magazine (1)

HSE Publications currently used
Breastfeeding your baby Feeding your baby
Guide to pregnancy Pregnancy and Listeria
Post natal depression Give Baby a breather
Healthy eating for pregnancy Safe sleep
Breastfeeding your ill or premature baby
Breastfeeding out and about
Combining breastfeeding and work
How to prepare your baby’s bottle feed

Educational materials that hospitals feel they need but don’t have
9 yes and 5 no
Topics listed as needed:
Gestational wheels Skin to skin DVDs
Post natal depression Listeria
Newborn screening test (PKU) Mastitis
Breastfeeding out and about
Family support for breastfeeding
Breastfeeding late premature babies
Multilingual versions

Conclusions from the survey
• All 15 use printed information, all use HSE material and all also print own material.
• 11 hospitals print their own Hospital Information Booklet and others are developing this.
• 5 hospitals said that it can be difficult to source sufficient HSE leaflets.
• Several hospitals don’t seem to be aware of what material is available from HSE.
• The way in which commercial packs are reviewed varies.

The Way Forward
• Could hospitals share development of own materials?
• Should we jointly ask for code compliant materials rather than each hospital negotiating individually with commercial companies?
• Can we establish needs for materials provided nationally by HSE?

Margaret O’Leary, Margaret Hynes, Mary Mahon, all IBCLCs and CMS Breastfeeding

The Baby Friendly Initiative in Ireland is grant-aided by the Health Service Executive
BFHI Link is on-line at www.babyfriendly.ie