

WBTi North Korea



World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi)

Indicator: **Early Initiation of Breastfeeding/Infant Feeding**

Name: Kim and Song

Country: North Korea



Assessment of breastfeeding: North Korea

Information Source: Interviews with doctors and mothers (escaped) from NK. 2012 North Korea nutrition status report (NK Central Statistics Agency) was also referred.

Partners for the assessment process

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Doctor from NK, Staff of NK defectors organization

Gaps detected for the indicator **Early Initiation of Breastfeeding / Infant Feeding** from the last assessment



Key gaps: Mothers in North Korea are encouraged to breastfeed to new babies, yet few mothers breastfeed right after giving birth to baby. Early initiation of breastfeeding is rather rare in North Korea, especially when delivered at hospital.

Encouragingly, duration period of breastfeeding was extended to 6 months from 3 months in 2001 in NK. Yet recently wealthy family with high educational background tend to prefer bottle feeding to breastfeeding.

Gaps detected for the indicator **Early Initiation of Breastfeeding /Infant Feeding** from the last assessment



Usually, when delivered at hospital, few mothers breastfeed mainly because mother and baby are separated at the hospital. While new mothers are encouraged to breastfeed right after giving birth to baby, most mothers breastfeed after one day or half-day. When having cesarean operation, most mothers breastfeed after 2 or 3 days.

- Percentage of Early Initiation of Breastfeeding is 28.1%, which was improved comparing to 18% (2009) .

Note: previous assessment by IBFAN Asia was not available.

Gaps detected for the indicator **Early Initiation of Breastfeeding / Infant Feeding** from the last assessment



It's presumed that 40% of babies at 6 months are being exclusively breastfed, while 20% of infants at 8 months are exclusively breastfed. 62.9% of infants at 6 to 8 months have at least one kind of food.

- Percentage of Bottle Feeding is about 40%. 20% of babies at 22 to 24 months are being breastfed with complimentary feeding presumably because of encouragement of breastfeeding.

Recommendations for the indicator **Early Initiation of Breastfeeding /Infant Feeding**



Promotion and education of breastfeeding and appropriate infant feeding and mothers nutrition

- Education for parents: Benefits of breastfeeding should be promoted through education programs for parents including family with high educational background to prevent wealthy families' negative influence in breastfeeding
- Support of breastfeeding mothers: To increase breastfeeding, breastfeeding mothers' health should be improved by support of nutritional food to new mothers.

Action Taken for the indicator **Early Initiation of Breastfeeding /Infant Feeding /Plan of Action**



Plan of Action

Network action is needed for promotion and support of breastfeeding in North Korea. More information gathering is necessary for network action.

- Education programs
- Network programs