

Growth patterns of breastfed infants in seven countries

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An international effort is underway to develop a new international growth reference for assessing the growth of young children, especially breastfed infants who appear to falter relative to the currently recommended National Center for Health Statistics/World Health Organization reference. While limited data from high socioeconomic status children from different parts of the world suggest that their growth patterns are similar, there is no comprehensive study of breastfed infants. The WHO Multinational Study of Breastfeeding and Lactational Amenorrhea provides bi-weekly weights and 2-4 weekly length measurements on breastfed babies from selected sites in Australia, Chile, China, Guatemala, India, Nigeria and Sweden. Multi-level modelling was used to analyse between-site

differences in the growth of approximately 120 infants per site, after adjustment for maternal stature and infant feeding pattern. All mothers were literate and mean educational levels were well above national averages,