Editorial

Policy on infant formula industry funding, support or sponsorship of articles submitted for publication

Annette Beasley*1 and Lisa H Amir2

Address: 1School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand and 2Mother & Child Health Research, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia

Email: Annette Beasley* - Annette.Beasley@vuw.ac.nz; Lisa H Amir - l.amir@latrobe.edu.au
* Corresponding author

Abstract

Despite current scientific evidence that artificial feeding is a harmful practice, unquestioned acceptance of breastfeeding as the normal or "default" method of infant feeding remains elusive in the industrialised world. Throughout the developing world the profound consequences of the aggressive marketing strategies of the infant formula industry since the end of the Second World War is well known. A key objective of the International Breastfeeding Journal is to promote breastfeeding through addressing issues that encourage breastfeeding initiation, duration and effective management. Informing this aim is the recognition of artificial feeding as a harmful practice that places infant health at risk. From this perspective it would be unethical for this journal to accept for publication any manuscript that has received funding, sponsorship or any other means of support from infant formula manufacturers. This stance is consistent with the journal's aim of supporting, protecting and promoting breastfeeding. It will also contribute to the promotion of a breastfeeding culture.

Editorial

Despite current scientific evidence that artificial feeding is a harmful practice [1], unquestioned acceptance of breastfeeding as the normal or "default" method of infant feeding [2] remains elusive throughout the industrialised world. The dominance of an infant formula feeding culture is evident through popular beliefs such as "artificial milk feeds [are]...at least as good for the baby (if not actually better) as breast feeding", and ambivalent views associated with "give it a go" attitudes [3]. This lack of a breastfeeding culture in most industrialised nations is the legacy of decades of commercial marketing of infant formula, often endorsed by medical practices [4].

Throughout the developing world the profound consequences of the aggressive marketing strategies of the infant formula industry particularly since the end of the Second World War is well known. Public awareness of the tragic outcome of the use of infant formula in the developing world led to a consumer boycott of Nestlé products during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Around this time the first of a series of international strategies designed to reduce infant mortality rates through regulating the promotion of artificial baby milk was implemented. In 1981, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes [5]. The aim of the International Code was "to contribute to the provision of safe and adequate nutrition for infants, by the protection and promotion of breast-feeding, and by ensuring the proper use of breast-milk substitutes, when these are necessary, on the basis of adequate information and through appropriate marketing and dis-
companies provide a critical contribution to infant health research into child health” [9] (p. 337) because “formula should not be censored for industrial collaborative milk industry. In the late 1990s, Lucas argued that “promotion practices have generated ethical debate The profound consequences of the harmful impact of for- babies are simply “normal”!

feeding is the biological norm, breastfed babies should by the formula industry and so endorses the notion of promted and sustained over decades of marketing of artifi-

milk. As Wiessinger points out, the industry’s promoted and sustained over decades of marketing of artifi-党中央建议深化国家监察体制改革,构建集中统一、权威高效的监察体系,实现对所有行使公权力的公职人员监察全覆盖。坚持标本兼治,纪法衔接,把制度优势转化为治理效能。进一步健全党和国家监督体系,突出政治监督,确保权力不被滥用、权力受到制约和监督。
British Journal of Midwifery managing director and publisher, Mark Allen. Among other things, Allen advocates the parents’ right of choice, and concern that exclusion of infant formula advertising would discriminate against parents who do not breastfeed [16]. Informing Allen’s stance is the view that “we are professional publishers, not moral guardians” [16] (p. 715).

The Sachs/Allen debate draws attention to the challenges that need to be overcome if breastfeeding is to be accepted as the unquestioned “default” method of infant feeding. Central to this challenge are the ethics of the industry’s funding, sponsorship and support of infant feeding research. Not only does such patronage jeopardise the independence of researchers and health professionals alike but more importantly it promotes and sustains a formula feeding culture.

A key objective of the International Breastfeeding Journal is to promote breastfeeding through addressing issues that encourage breastfeeding initiation, duration and effective management. Informing this aim is the recognition of artificial feeding as a harmful practice that places infant health at risk. From this perspective it would be unethical for this journal to accept for publication any manuscript that has received funding, sponsorship or any other means of support from infant formula manufacturers. This stance is consistent with the journal’s aim of supporting breast-feeding: the specia

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors’ contributions

AB wrote the first draft of the paper. LHA conceived the idea for the editorial and contributed to the writing.

References