

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Breastfeeding Attenuates Crying of a Distressed Infant

I read with great interest the recent article by Sabety et al,¹ who reported that breast milk was better for pain reduction before venipuncture. Several methods have been reported to reduce pain and discomfort associated with injection and venipuncture, such as holding, swaddling them, sucking on a pacifier, diversion of attention or giving sweet solutions (such as sucrose or glucose).^{2,3} As mentioned in the article,¹ some methods (sucrose/glucose or pacifier) might interfere, regular breastfeeding schedule.^{1,4} Indeed, among the analgesics studied for procedural pain, breastfeeding/ breast milk is a natural, easily available, and easy to use intervention.³ As a limitation, how the intervention might work was not discussed in the article.¹ There are several potential mechanisms by which breast milk or breast feeding might provide an analgesic effect.³ One of the possible explanation is that breast milk contains a higher concentration of tryptophan, a precursor of melatonin. Also, breastmilk is one of the sweetest milk in the world, contains 7% lactose. Not only the content of breast milk, but also breastfeeding is important to soothe infants and toddlers. Also, pain is relieved in human newborns when they are exposed to odors from their mother's milk.³ It was reported that breastfeeding, providing sucking and physical sensation (skin-to-skin contact with mother), gave superior analgesia to other kinds of non-pharmacological analgesia in healthy term neonates during

heel prick.⁵ Breastfeeding is capable of attenuating crying of a distressed infant. Therefore, it would be better to add breastfeeding as a key component to manage pain and anxiety associated with procedures for infants and toddlers.

References

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