

## ABSTRACT

TITLE: Relationship between Breastfeeding and the Development of Asthma: A Review of the Literature

STUDENT: Jessica J. Johnson

DEGREE: Master of Arts

COLLEGE: Applied Sciences and Technology

DATE: May 2012

PAGES: 74

Asthma is one of the major common diseases seen in children of all ages. Past research has noted that breastfeeding has a protective effect against the development of asthma, although the results remain conflicted. The purpose of this research paper was to conduct an extensive literature review to determine if sufficient evidence exists to identify a protective effect of breastfeeding on the incidence of asthma in children. Fourteen studies were reviewed to determine if current research literature solidifies a relationship between breastfeeding and asthma and/or wheeze. Nine of the 14 studies (64%) showed a protective effect of breastfeeding on asthma, 1 (11%) found that breastfeeding increased the risk for developing asthma in the absence of family history, and 3 (20%) noted both protective and non-protective effects, and one found no effect. Six (43%) demonstrated that the protective effect was influenced positively (n=3) or negatively (n=3) when a family history of asthma was present. Overall, more studies demonstrated a protective effect of breastfeeding, with the impact varying by family history. Results continued to be conflicted as evidenced by the current literature review.