
Submission no. 137AUTHORISED: 28/3/07 *MC*

I commend the Committee for undertaking an inquiry into the health implications of infant feeding. I feel that the correlation between many of today's major health issues and the risks of artificial feeding is very high, and worthy of greater recognition and exploration. Obesity, diabetes, asthma, allergies and some cancers are all impacted negatively by artificial infant feeding, and yet nowhere in the public sphere is the rise in these conditions linked with the normalisation of formula-feeding in the second half of the 20th Century, or the potential of increased breastfeeding to help in the multi-faceted campaigns to tackle these issues.

As a busy, breastfeeding mother, I regret I do not have the time I would like to research and reference my arguments. I trust that the Committee will review the substantial research evidence available through WHO, ABA and others including ongoing research at UWA. I also commend the consumer-friendly, referenced summaries available at www.kellymom.com. It is clear from the evidence that the risks to health posed by formula feeding are many, varied, long-lasting, pertinent to mother, baby and the wider population, and not well-understood by the public or most medical professionals.

My recommendations are:

1. Alter the language of the Enquiry, and all government publications to reflect breastfeeding not as "best" or an "option", but as "normal" and "optimal". Rather than examining the 'benefits' of breastfeeding, the government should emphasise the risks and costs of the alternative.
2. Fund further research and analysis of existing data that would assist in quantifying the long and short-term health implications, financial and environmental costs of formula feeding. Publish and promote the findings.
3. Fund a multi-media health promotion campaign