# Influence of alcohol consumption on breastfeeding initiation and duration in Australia

## Researchers

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## Summary

Reports in the literature show that health professionals rarely give mothers advice on alcohol consumption and lactation. In one US study nearly half of mothers surveyed were advised to drink alcohol while only one sixth were advised to abstain. However, alcohol is generally reported to have a number of adverse effects on lactation and infant behaviour.

Many cultures believe that alcohol promotes breast milk production and aids in settling infants. But a literature review found no published studies of alcohol consumption and lactation in Australia; and only a limited number of overseas studies.

The objectives of this study are to determine the levels of alcohol consumption of breastfeeding mothers; and to compare levels of consumption, and attitudes towards consumption, of mothers who are feeding infants using formula. As alcohol consumption and cigarette smoking are often associated, the smoking patterns of mothers were also analysed.

## Outcomes

This study highlights the need for consistent health education information to be provided by health professionals to women during lactation. The study's recommendations were considered in formulating the latest NHMRC guidelines on alcohol consumption.

Subsequently, Dr Giglia in conjunction with the Australian Breastfeeding Association published a pamphlet Alcohol and Breastfeeding: a guide for mothers.

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