

Breastfeeding: It's not as bad as they say

There seems to be a school of thought in medicine that just doesn't like breastfeeding. Not exclusive breastfeeding, at any event, and certainly not for any prolonged time.

As if to vindicate this stance, researchers have 'proved' that breastfeeding doesn't offer the child any protection against allergies and asthma in later life. Breastfeeding advocates have always claimed that this was one of its many benefits. Unfortunately, the data doesn't support the researchers' assertions.

This 'new' study is, in fact, quite an old study that was carried out six years ago, in 2001. And the aim of the original research had nothing to do with asthma or allergy. It set out to discover whether gastrointestinal infection could be reduced by breastfeeding.

Somehow this same data was this year dressed up with the new title 'Effect of prolonged and exclusive breastfeeding on risk of allergy and asthma'.

We wonder why?

(Source: British Medical Journal, 2007; 335: 899).