

Breastfeeding awareness for schools

Evaluation of a CD ROM and teaching materials



Health
Promotion
Agency

Breastfeeding awareness for schools

Evaluation of a
CD ROM and
teaching materials

Contents

Page

List of tables 3

Background 4

The pilot study 7

Results 9

Conclusions 22

References 24

List of tables

Page

| | | |
|-----------|--|----|
| Table 1: | Subject areas taught by teachers attending agreement trials..... | 8 |
| Table 2: | Resources previously used to cover breastfeeding | 9 |
| Table 3: | Initial impressions of the CD ROM | 10 |
| Table 4: | Teachers' views on which curriculum areas the CD ROM covers | 10 |
| Table 5: | Pupils' immediate reactions to the resource | 12 |
| Table 6: | Teachers' expectations for pupils from using the resource | 12 |
| Table 7: | Teachers' views on whether Lesson 1 met its stated objectives | 13 |
| Table 8: | Teachers' views on whether Lesson 2 met its stated objectives | 13 |
| Table 9: | Teachers' opinions of changes in pupils' attitudes after the lesson | 14 |
| Table 10: | Teachers' opinions of the suitability of the resource | 14 |
| Table 11: | Teachers' views on the suitability of the resource for use in different subject areas | 15 |
| Table 12: | Teachers' views on the suitability of the resource for different Key Stages | 15 |
| Table 13: | Pupils' thoughts or feelings about breastfeeding before the lesson | 16 |
| Table 14: | Pupils' views of the most important reason to breastfeed, for babies | 17 |
| Table 15: | Pupils' views of the most important reason to breastfeed, for mothers | 17 |
| Table 16: | What pupils enjoyed most about the lesson | 18 |
| Table 17: | What pupils enjoyed least about the lesson | 18 |
| Table 18: | Pupils' opinions of visual aspects of the resource | 19 |
| Table 19: | Pupils' opinions on the suitability of the resource for different age groups | 19 |
| Table 20: | Pupils' opinions on the amount of information in the resource | 19 |
| Table 21: | The main things pupils remembered from the lesson | 20 |
| Table 22: | Aspects of the lesson that pupils found surprising | 20 |
| Table 23: | Pupils' overall opinions of the lesson | 21 |
| Table 24: | Location of pupils having seen someone breastfeeding | 21 |
| Table 25: | Pupils' views about future feeding intentions | 21 |

Background

The World Health Organization's *Global strategy on infant and young child feeding* states that while breastfeeding is a natural act, it is also a learned behaviour and therefore "accurate information should be provided through schools and other educational channels to promote greater awareness and positive perceptions".¹

UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative (www.babyfriendly.org.uk) also recommends that future parents are provided with accurate, unbiased information on infant feeding as part of their education and that breastfeeding education should be included in the national curriculum; if this is not possible, then schools and teachers should be encouraged to include breastfeeding awareness where possible within the existing curriculum.

At a regional level, the *Breastfeeding strategy for Northern Ireland* recommends that breastfeeding education is undertaken in both primary and secondary level education.² This has the overall aim of raising public awareness of breastfeeding.

Presently in Northern Ireland breastfeeding is referred to within the school curriculum in the following subjects:

- Key Stage 3
 - Science
 - Home economics
- Key Stage 4
 - Science
 - Child development
 - Health and social care
 - Home economics

Other subjects where breastfeeding awareness could be introduced include personal, social and health education, social studies, life skills, and citizenship and media studies.

The resource may also be used within the context of a healthy school, where a whole school approach can increase awareness and influence healthy choices within the wider community.

Development of the *Breastfeeding awareness for schools* CD ROM

Prior to the development of the current resource, a regional breastfeeding awareness resource had not been available for schools. Schools in the Eastern and Western Health and Social Services Board areas have had some access to teaching materials via packs developed locally.

In order to pursue the Action Plan contained in the *Breastfeeding Strategy for Northern Ireland*, in June 2006 the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland (HPA) undertook a review and produced a paper entitled *Breastfeeding education in the school setting: a review of the literature*.^{2,3} The paper aimed to strengthen the case for breastfeeding education in schools by highlighting opportunities and approaches. While this document was in draft form, a representative from the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) was invited to attend the DHSSPS Breastfeeding Strategy Implementation Group to comment on the HPA recommendations for approaches to providing breastfeeding awareness education in schools. The CCEA representative suggested that any new teaching resource should be tailored specifically to Northern Ireland and should be provided in an electronic format. The HPA therefore developed a teaching resource in the form of a CD ROM.

CCEA suggested that the HPA provide a presentation to teachers as part of their teaching agreement trial training days. The agreement trials were held over two days in October 2006. At these trials the HPA's regional breastfeeding coordinator demonstrated the CD ROM teaching resource to teaching staff from across Northern Ireland who were mostly, but not exclusively, responsible for teaching child development and home economics. At the end of these sessions, all teachers received a copy of the CD ROM to take back to their school.

Aim of the CD ROM

The CD ROM was developed with the aim of assisting teachers to approach breastfeeding in a way that is interesting, thought provoking and encourages discussion on the subject.

It is also hoped that the information gained by pupils will help to positively influence the choices they make as prospective parents in the future.

Objectives

The CD ROM has the following objectives:

- to provide materials to encourage discussion and help pupils explore attitudes to breastfeeding;
- to increase awareness among teachers and pupils of the importance of breastfeeding to health;
- to improve knowledge and start to challenge negative attitudes towards and misconceptions about breastfeeding;
- to enable teachers to provide sound information on infant feeding rather than having to rely on promotional material and biased information from formula companies;
- to influence healthier choices for prospective parents.

Target audience

The CD ROM is primarily aimed at Year 10 and 11 pupils; however, it is also suitable for older pupils.

Development of the CD ROM content

The content of the CD ROM was decided in the context of addressing the needs of both pupils and teachers in relation to the inclusion of breastfeeding within the existing school curriculum. The CD ROM provides factual information on breastfeeding and also enables pupils to consider their own attitudes and the perceptions of society towards breastfeeding. The information provided about the biological and anatomical considerations for breastfeeding are particularly relevant to science pupils and the social and attitudinal considerations fit well within the subjects of health and social care, and home economics. The needs of pupils studying child development are also well met in relation to breastfeeding and its content is particularly useful for choosing coursework and for sources of further information.

The resource was designed to consist of two lessons, each of which could be delivered in the recommended time of 30 minutes each. This would allow them to be easily completed in a single lesson period.

The CD ROM included the following elements for the teacher to use themselves or with their pupils as part of the lesson.

- Background reading for teachers about the rationale for the development of the resource.
- Preparation notes for teachers for each lesson, explaining the aims of the lesson and guidance and instructions for using the presentation.
- Presentation slides, also containing teacher notes and prompts for use during the lesson.
- Worksheets for pupils containing a series of statements about breastfeeding, which could be used before the lesson to stimulate pupils to think about the subject.
- Revision notes for pupils containing a list of the main points covered in the lesson.
- Suggested projects for teachers to use with pupils to support or extend the learning from the lesson.
- Resource list containing additional resources or websites related to breastfeeding.
- Image library for use in project work.
- Printable slides for acetates.

Objectives of the lessons

The objectives of Lesson 1 were to:

- explore pupils' attitudes to breastfeeding;
- allow opportunities for discussion on breasts, sexuality and nurture;
- reflect on the history of infant feeding practices;
- examine the global impact of low breastfeeding rates;
- increase knowledge about the importance of breastfeeding to health.

The objectives of Lesson 2 were to:

- review social and cultural barriers to breastfeeding;
- reiterate the importance of breastfeeding to maternal and child health;
- explore the biological difference between breastfeeding and formula feeding;
- examine the basic anatomy and physiology of human lactation;
- provide a basic understanding of how breastfeeding works.

The pilot study

Aims of the pilot

The pilot study aimed to assess the suitability and usefulness of the *Breastfeeding awareness for schools* CD ROM as a teaching resource for use in post-primary schools.

Objectives of the pilot

To assess with teachers:

- readiness and enthusiasm to use a resource for the teaching of breastfeeding;
- views on the suitability and applicability of the resource to different age groups (within post-primary education);
- views on how the resource meets the needs of the curriculum for different subject areas;
- views on the practical aspects of using the resource in lessons with pupils;
- views on how pupils reacted to the resource;
- whether they felt the resources met their own expectations and met the specific aims of the resource itself;
- to assess whether the pilot approach adopted was an appropriate model for integration into the school curriculum.

To assess with pupils:

- overall enjoyment of the lesson;
- messages and learning picked up from the lesson;
- opinions of the design and images in the resource;
- the suitability of the resource for their age group;
- their views on the content and delivery of the programme.

Method

The pilot study on the *Breastfeeding awareness for schools* CD ROM involved four aspects:

- immediate feedback from teachers at the teaching agreement trials;
- scoping exercise to ascertain use of the resource;
- feedback from teachers who used the resource in their school;
- feedback from pupils who took part in the lessons.

At the agreement trials, teachers were given a short form to gather their immediate feedback on the resource. This included questions concerning prior teaching of the topic of breastfeeding, teachers' initial impressions of the resource itself, the suitability and appropriateness of the resource and their intentions to use it with their pupils. At this stage contact details for all teachers were obtained.

Teachers were contacted by phone and post between January and March 2007, to find out more details about their plans for using the resource. At this stage teachers were asked whether they were willing to be involved in feeding back from using the resource in their schools. Teachers who agreed to participate in the teacher feedback process were posted a questionnaire for themselves. Teachers who agreed to participate in the pupil feedback process were posted sufficient pupil feedback sheets for them to distribute to their class. Questionnaires were posted at an appropriate time agreed with each teacher, either just before teaching the class or just afterwards.

Sample and response

Teaching agreement trials

Out of 39 teachers who completed the feedback form at the agreement trials, 14 teachers reported that they teach both home economics and child development, and 11 said they teach home economics, child development and health and social care. Almost all teachers reported teaching more than one subject. All of the teachers who completed this stage of the evaluation were female (n=39).

Table 1: Subject areas taught by teachers attending agreement trials

| Subject | n |
|---|----|
| Child development | 36 |
| Home economics | 34 |
| Health and social care | 15 |
| Hospitality | 3 |
| PSHE | 1 |
| Science | 1 |
| CACHE (Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education) | 1 |
| Other | 7 |

Base (n) = 39

Out of 39 teachers, all of them teach Key Stage 4 and 36 out of the 39 also teach Key Stage 3. In addition to this a number of teachers reported that they are responsible for teaching pupils at the post-16 level for A and AS Level or Diplomas (n=17).

Feedback from teachers

Overall, out of the 39 teachers who received the resource, 28 teachers reported having used it sometime between October 2006 and June 2007. Reasons for not having used the resource included:

- having already covered the topic before receiving the resource;
- not having the opportunity to use it yet (four teachers reported that they intend to use the resource in the future);
- using an alternative resource (Western Board).

Initially, 25 teachers agreed to take part in the teachers' feedback process; however, 16 teachers (from 15 schools) returned the feedback form which they were sent once they had used the resource (60% response rate).

Out of the 16 teachers who returned the feedback forms, 15 stated that they had used the CD ROM in a child development class (Key Stage 4) and one had used it in a home economics class (Key Stage 4).

Feedback from pupils

Teachers were asked whether they would be willing to involve their pupils in providing feedback on the resource. Ten teachers agreed to take part in this process; however, completed forms were returned from seven schools. A total of 90 pupils were involved and all pupils who took part were in Year 11. The majority (76) were in a child development class, with 14 in a home economics class. Only one of the classes that took part in the pupils' evaluation was a coeducational class (n=12), all of the others were all-girl classes.

Results

Immediate feedback from teaching agreement trials

Previous teaching of breastfeeding in schools

At the agreement trials 32 teachers reported that they had previously covered breastfeeding with pupils in their school, while seven confirmed that they had not. Those teachers who had previously covered breastfeeding in their school were asked about any resources that they had previously used. Thirty teachers had used books and nine of these reported the specific book they used, which was a childcare development textbook. Nineteen teachers used leaflets and booklets, and 10 of these identified that they had used HPA breastfeeding information. Ten teachers reported that they had had talks from guest speakers such as community midwives or breastfeeding mothers. Ten teachers had used the internet as a teaching resource for covering breastfeeding.

Table 2: Resources previously used to cover breastfeeding

| | n |
|--|----|
| Textbooks | 30 |
| Talk from guests, eg community midwife, new mother, hospital breastfeeding coordinator | 10 |
| Leaflets/booklets | 19 |
| Own resources, eg produced by teacher, worksheets | 7 |
| Other resources/media, eg video, internet sites, magazines | 19 |

Base (n) = 32

Initial impressions of the CD ROM

Teachers were asked which year groups they thought that the resource was suitable for (at this stage, this question was open-ended). Only three teachers thought that the resource was suitable for Years 8 or 9. Nine teachers suggested that it was suitable for Year 10 pupils. The majority of teachers saw the resources as being suitable for Years 11 and 12; 37 teachers mentioned its suitability for Year 11 and 33 teachers mentioned Year 12. Seven teachers thought it would be suitable for pupils at post-16 and AS Level.

Teachers were asked to rate their initial impressions of the resource. Feedback was extremely positive, with no negative feedback being expressed.

Table 3: Initial impressions of the CD ROM

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| | n | n | n | n | n |
| Visually appealing for the target group | 31 | 8 | - | - | - |
| Using appropriate images for the age group of the pupils it is intended for | 31 | 7 | 1 | - | - |
| Using appropriate content for the age group of the pupils it is intended for | 29 | 10 | - | - | - |
| At an appropriate level of understanding for the pupils it is intended for | 30 | 9 | - | - | - |
| Complementary to the existing programmes which the school currently offers | 29 | 6 | 4 | - | - |
| Promoting teaching strategies which involve pupils actively in their own learning and which build upon pupils' experiences | 29 | 9 | 1 | - | - |

Base (n) = 39

Resource content and the curriculum

Teachers were asked if they thought that the resource met the learning needs for any aspects of the curriculum. Almost all teachers agreed that both lessons met the needs of Key Stage 4 child development and Key Stage 4 home economics.

Table 4: Teachers' views on which curriculum areas the CD ROM covers

| Curriculum area | Lesson 1 n | Lesson 2 n | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Child development KS3 | 12 | 7 | |
| Child development KS4 | 37 | 37 | |
| Home economics KS3 | 12 | 6 | |
| Home economics KS4 | 31 | 31 | |
| Health and social care GCSE | 3 | | |
| (AS Level) - Health promotion unit | 2 | | |
| Year 13 - Home economics - Module 2 | 1 | | |
| CACHE (Certificate and Diploma) | 1 | | |

Base (n) = 39

Using the resource in the classroom

Teachers were asked whether they would be able to use the resource in the format in which it was produced (CD ROM) or whether they would have to, for example, print the resources in order to use them. Thirty two teachers reported that they would be able to use the resources in the form of the CD ROM in the classroom. If they were unable to use the resources in the form of the CD ROM, they were asked what format would be most useful. One teacher responded that they would be able to use them in another classroom. One teacher would make acetates to use with an overhead projector and one would print off the slides to use with their pupils.

All teachers reported that they would be likely to use the resource, and 35 of these said they would be very likely to use it.

At this stage no teachers were able to give any suggestions for changes to the resource. Some teachers took the opportunity to make additional positive comments about the resource and it was mentioned about how suitable the resource appeared to be for their pupils.

“It is wonderful to see the HPA producing a resource like this specifically for school use - thank you!”

Feedback from scoping exercise on use of the resource

Teachers who were unable to take part in the teacher feedback process at the agreement trials, or did not return their questionnaires, were telephoned to obtain some information about which classes and age groups they used the resource with.

- 9 teachers used it with Year 11.
- 9 teachers used it with Year 12.
- 4 teachers used the resource for revision of the topic of breastfeeding with their pupils.

Teacher feedback form

The following section is based on the responses from teachers who returned the teacher feedback form sent to them after having used the resource. This was a total of 16 teachers.

Use of the resource

Teachers were asked to rate how useful they had found the resource. All teachers (n=15) who used the resource in child development reported that they found it useful, with 13 of these finding it very useful. The teacher who used it in a home economics class stated that they found the resource ‘very useful’. One teacher reported that possibly in the future they will use it for GCSE health and social care.

Eleven teachers reported that they delivered both lessons, and three reported that they delivered only Lesson 1, no teacher used only Lesson 2. Four teachers provided the resource for pupils to use on their own for coursework. Seven teachers gave each pupil a copy of the slides as handouts.

Teachers’ expectations and pupils’ reactions

No teacher reported having any concerns or reservations about using the resource with or providing the resource to their pupils.

Teachers were asked to give their opinion on whether their pupils had enjoyed the lesson, and all teachers reported that their pupils had done so. Teachers reported their pupils’ immediate reactions to the resource. All of the reactions reported were positive, with 12 teachers stating that their pupils were interested, attentive or enthusiastic during the lessons. Eleven of the teachers’ comments related to the visual appeal of the resource to the pupils, including specific graphics and photos. Eight teachers reported that the resource generated discussion or debate between the pupils.

Table 5: Pupils' immediate reactions to the resource

| | n |
|--|----|
| Kept pupils interested or attentive/pupils enthusiastic | 12 |
| Positive reactions to graphics/photos/visually appealing | 11 |
| Pupils keen to take part in discussion/led to interaction | 8 |
| Information was informative and set out in a clear fashion/easy to follow and understand | 3 |
| Pupils liked link with Northern Ireland | 2 |

Base (n) = 16

Teachers were asked what they hoped pupils gained by using the resource. Almost all of them (15 out of 16) said that they hoped their pupils would gain better understanding of the subject and of the importance of breastfeeding.

Table 6: Teachers' expectations for pupils from using the resource

| | n |
|--|----|
| Better understanding of subject and importance of breastfeeding/benefits | 15 |
| Teaching considerations, eg reinforce teaching/revision, handouts for coursework | 6 |
| Raise their awareness of breastfeeding/reduce embarrassment/dispel myths | 5 |
| Thought provoking/understand differing attitudes to breastfeeding | 3 |
| To understand problems facing those who wish to breastfeed/barriers to breastfeeding | 2 |
| Other | 3 |

Base (n) = 16

Teachers were then asked to state whether each lesson had met these expectations. Twelve teachers reported that Lesson 1 had fully fulfilled their expectations and two reported that it fulfilled their expectations somewhat. Nine teachers reported that Lesson 2 had fully fulfilled their expectations and three reported that it fulfilled their expectations somewhat. No teacher reported that none of their expectations had been fulfilled.

Teachers were asked to state whether there was anything else they hoped pupils gained by using the resource. A number of points were mentioned including that the pupils were able to use the information when completing their coursework (n=2) and pupils were able to have a discussion during the class (n=3).

Teachers were presented with a list of the stated objectives of Lesson 1 and asked to rate to what extent they agree or disagree that the lesson met those objectives. No teacher to date disagreed that any of the objectives were met. However, three teachers were unable to decide as to whether Lesson 1 had 'allowed opportunity for discussion on breasts, sexuality and nurture'.

Table 7: Teachers' views on whether Lesson 1 met its stated objectives

| Objective | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| | n | n | n | n | n |
| To explore teenagers' attitudes to breastfeeding | 12 | 4 | - | - | - |
| To allow opportunities for discussion on breasts, sexuality and nurture | 9 | 4 | 3 | - | - |
| To reflect on the history of infant feeding practices | 10 | 5 | 1 | - | - |
| To examine the global impact of low breastfeeding rates | 9 | 7 | - | - | - |
| To increase knowledge about the importance of breastfeeding to health | 15 | 1 | - | - | - |

Base (n) = 16

Teachers were asked to identify whether they had found any of the slides difficult to discuss with their pupils. Although no teacher reported that they had found any slides in Lesson 1 difficult to discuss, two teachers did report that some sections did not hold as much interest as others. These were 'the history of infant feeding' and 'worldwide breastfeeding'.

Teachers were presented with a list of the stated objectives of Lesson 2 and asked to rate to what extent they agree or disagree that the lesson met those objectives. There was complete agreement that all of these objectives had been met.

Table 8: Teachers' views on whether Lesson 2 met its stated objectives

| Objective | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| | n | n | n | n | n |
| To review social and cultural barriers to breastfeeding | 6 | 7 | - | - | - |
| To reiterate the importance of breastfeeding to maternal and child health | 10 | 3 | - | - | - |
| To explore the biological difference between breastfeeding and formula feeding | 9 | 4 | - | - | - |
| To examine the basic anatomy and physiology of human lactation | 8 | 5 | - | - | - |
| To gain basic understanding of how breastfeeding works | 9 | 4 | - | - | - |

Base (n) = 13

Four teachers reported that some slides in Lesson 2 proved difficult to discuss with their pupils. Two comments related to the issue that certain sections did not encourage much discussion, these were 'what formula can't provide' and 'how breastfeeding works'. Two teachers reported that 'what formula can't provide' was a difficult concept for some pupils and was too advanced for the pupils with whom they used it.

Teachers' opinions of pupils' attitudes

After teaching the lesson, 14 teachers reported that they perceived changes in their pupils' attitudes towards breastfeeding, and two reported that they did not. Seven teachers made the general comment that pupils were now more aware of the advantages and benefits of breastfeeding. All of the statements made by teachers related to a positive change in attitude or knowledge.

Table 9: Teachers' opinions of changes in pupils' attitudes after the lesson

| | n |
|---|---|
| They know more about the advantages/benefits | 7 |
| Pupils felt better about idea of breastfeeding/more open to it/less embarrassed | 5 |
| Other | 3 |

Base (n) = 14

Teachers were asked specifically whether they perceived an increase in confidence in their pupils in discussing the subject of breastfeeding: 13 teachers reported that they had, two reported that they did not. Thirteen teachers reported that they perceived an increase in willingness of their pupils to discuss the subject of breastfeeding, one did not.

Suitability of the resource

Teachers were asked to rate their level of agreement with a number of statements relating to the suitability of the resource. All teachers agreed that the resource was appealing and appropriate for their pupils.

Table 10: Teachers' opinions of the suitability of the resource

| | Strongly agree n | Agree n | Neither agree nor disagree n | Disagree n | Strongly disagree n |
|--|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| The resource was up to date | 16 | - | - | - | - |
| The resource was visually appealing | 15 | 1 | - | - | - |
| The resource was sensitive to the pupil group | 13 | 3 | - | - | - |
| The resource used an appropriate level of language | 12 | 4 | - | - | - |
| The resource contained appropriate images | 15 | 1 | - | - | - |
| The images in the resource were appealing to the pupil group | 14 | 2 | - | - | - |

Base (n) = 16

Teaching the lessons

In total, 15 teachers reported that the resource contained all of the materials required or information necessary to deliver each lesson. One teacher thought that it did not for both Lesson 1 and Lesson 2. This teacher had used the resource with a child development Key Stage 4 class and reported that more detail was required for a GCSE class.

All teachers who used Lesson 1 or Lesson 2 or both, reported that the resource had provided them with enough information to answer any questions that arose from pupils.

The resources were designed so that they could be delivered in the recommended time of 30 minutes each, this would allow them to be completed in a single lesson period. Teachers were asked if they had been able to do so. Three teachers reported that they were unable to complete Lesson 1 in the recommended time. Two teachers were unable to complete Lesson 2 in the recommended time.

All 16 teachers who used Lesson 1 reported that they found it at the right level for the pupils that they used it with. All but one teacher who used Lesson 2 reported that they found it at the right level for their pupils; however, one reported that it had been too advanced for their pupils.

Teachers were asked to state whether they thought that the resource could be used in other subjects besides the ones they used it in. The most commonly reported subject was home economics. The one teacher who used the resource in a home economics class also agreed the lessons could be used in child development classes.

Table 11: Teachers' views on the suitability of the resource for use in different subject areas

| | Lesson 1 n | Lesson 2 n |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Science | 3 | 3 |
| Child development | 1 | 1 |
| Health and social care | 6 | 6 |
| Home economics | 11 | 8 |
| Personal, social and health education | 8 | 6 |

Base (n) = 15

Teachers were asked which other age groups, aside from those they had already used it with, they thought the resource would be suitable for. Lessons 1 and 2 were widely viewed as being appropriate for use with post-16 level pupils. Only two teachers regarded Lesson 2 as being suitable for KS3 pupils.

Table 12: Teachers' views on the suitability of the resource for different Key Stages

| | Lesson 1 | Lesson 2 |
|-------------|----------|----------|
| Key Stage 3 | 5 | 2 |
| Key Stage 4 | - | 1 |
| Post-16 | 7 | 9 |

Base (n) = 15

Teachers were asked to report if there had been any issues of embarrassment surrounding the lessons for either teachers or pupils. None of the teachers reported that there had been any embarrassment on their part in delivering the topic. Only one teacher reported that there were problems with embarrassment with pupils participating in the lesson, stating that they were “initially embarrassed but were made comfortable by staff being comfortable with topic”.

As a result of using the resource, 11 teachers encouraged their pupils to use the HPA website: www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk and nine encouraged them to use the website www.breastfedbabies.org.

Other comments and suggestions

Teachers were given the opportunity to include any additional comments about the resource or recommendations for additions or improvements. Many of the comments were suggestions for improvements or recommendations, for example:

“Interview real people and include their experiences of breastfeeding.”

“Additional video clips as these were very effective with pupils.”

“Maybe posters which could be displayed in school.”

Some of the comments were in general praise of the resource itself, with five teachers stating that they thought it was an excellent resource. One teacher commented that it was good to have a local resource to use with their pupils.

Other comments related to the practical use of the resource and how suitable it was for their pupils and allowed for discussion during the class (n=3). Two teachers commented on the length of time it took to complete the lessons which was longer than expected, however this was due to the amount of discussion that was generated through the course of the lessons.

Pupils' views

This section is based on the responses from pupils who completed the pupil feedback form. Forms were received from seven schools, from a total of 90 pupils.

Pupils were asked to reflect on what their own thoughts or feelings had been about breastfeeding before the lesson. Forty percent of pupils thought breastfeeding was important, a similar proportion (38%) of pupils reported that they did not know much about breastfeeding before the lesson, and around a quarter of pupils thought that it was embarrassing (24%).

Table 13: Pupils' thoughts or feelings about breastfeeding before the lesson

| | n | % |
|----------------------------|----|----|
| Thought it was important | 36 | 40 |
| Did not know much about it | 34 | 38 |
| Embarrassing | 22 | 24 |
| Didn't care | 12 | 13 |

Base (n) = 90

Pupils could select more than one response

Pupils were then asked what the most important reason to breastfeed was, for both baby and mother. Over two thirds (69%) of pupils understood that the most important reasons for a baby to be breastfed were health reasons, the second most popular answer was that breastmilk provides the correct nutrition for the baby (21%). Eighteen percent of pupils were able to highlight that breastfeeding was better for the baby, but the reason was not specified. Bonding between mother and baby was mentioned by 16% of pupils.

Table 14: Pupils' views of the most important reason to breastfeed, for babies

| | n | % |
|--|----|----|
| Lower risk/protection from diseases/health problems/prevents obesity | 61 | 69 |
| Correct nutrients in breastmilk | 18 | 21 |
| Better for baby (not specified) | 16 | 18 |
| Bonding between mother and baby | 14 | 16 |
| Higher IQ | 5 | 6 |
| Other | 3 | 3 |

Base (n) = 88

Health was the most popular reason cited for the mother to breastfeed (67%). Bonding was the second most commonly reported reason (29%), followed by weight loss which was mentioned by almost one quarter of pupils (24%).

Table 15: Pupils' views of the most important reason to breastfeed, for mothers

| | n | % |
|---|----|----|
| Health/prevents cancers/other illnesses | 60 | 67 |
| Bonding | 26 | 29 |
| Weight loss | 21 | 24 |
| Saves money | 6 | 7 |
| Giving baby the best nutrition | 6 | 7 |
| Uterus shrinking | 4 | 5 |
| Confidence/self-esteem | 3 | 3 |
| Saves time making up bottles/no preparation | 3 | 3 |
| Other | 2 | 2 |

Base (n) = 89

Overall, 98% of pupils reported that they had enjoyed the lesson. Pupils commonly reported that the thing that they most enjoyed about the lesson was learning new information about breastfeeding and the advantages over bottlefeeding (51%). These pupils did not specify what the new information that they had learnt was. The videos and adverts were popular too with 12% of pupils reporting that they had enjoyed these the most. Twelve percent of pupils said they had enjoyed the fact that the lesson was presented as a slideshow.

Table 16: What pupils enjoyed most about the lesson

| | n | % |
|--|----|----|
| Learning about advantages/finding out new info (unspecified) | 42 | 51 |
| The videos/adverts | 10 | 12 |
| The slideshows/PowerPoint/layout | 10 | 12 |
| The cartoons/pictures | 8 | 10 |
| Learning about health benefits | 6 | 7 |
| All of it/everything | 5 | 6 |
| Learning how to breastfeed | 3 | 4 |
| Learning that breastfeeding shouldn't be embarrassing | 2 | 2 |
| The discussions | 2 | 2 |
| Other | 4 | 5 |

Base (n) = 83

Just under half of the pupils provided a response to the question 'what, if anything did you enjoy least?'. Of these, over half (56%) reported that there was nothing that they didn't enjoy about the lessons; however, three pupils reported that the thing they enjoyed least was watching the mother breastfeed the baby. Three pupils commented that they did not like the section on 'what formula can't provide', as it was not part of their course.

Table 17: What pupils enjoyed least about the lesson

| | n | % |
|--|----|----|
| Nothing | 25 | 56 |
| Watching the mother breastfeed | 3 | 7 |
| What formula can't provide | 3 | 7 |
| Graphicness/seeing more than needed/revealing pictures | 3 | 7 |
| The picture of the twins | 2 | 4 |
| Lesson 1 and 2 repeated each other | 2 | 4 |
| Biology/science aspect | 2 | 4 |
| The duration/boring | 2 | 4 |
| Other | 2 | 4 |

Base (n) = 45

Opinions of the visual appearance of the resource were generally positive. Almost nine out of ten pupils (89%) thought that the colours used were good. The same proportion thought that the images and photographs used were good.

Table 18: Pupils' opinions of visual aspects of the resource

| | Good % | No opinion % | Poor % | Base (n) |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Colours | 89 | 7 | 4 | 90 |
| Design | 87 | 10 | 3 | 89 |
| Cartoons | 83 | 12 | 5 | 89 |
| Images/photographs | 89 | 10 | 1 | 89 |

Almost all pupils thought that these lessons were suitable for people of their own age, Year 11 (93%). Just under half thought that the lessons were suitable for people who were older than themselves (44%).

Table 19: Pupils' opinions on the suitability of the resource for different age groups

| Lesson would be suitable for people... | n | % |
|---|----------|----------|
| Younger than you | 18 | 20 |
| Your age | 84 | 93 |
| Older than you | 40 | 44 |

Base (n) = 90

Pupils could select more than one response

Almost all pupils thought that the amount of information contained in the lesson was 'just right' (92%). Only 6% thought that there was too much information.

Table 20: Pupils' opinions on the amount of information in the resource

| | n | % |
|------------|----------|----------|
| Too little | 2 | 2 |
| Just right | 82 | 92 |
| Too much | 5 | 6 |

Base (n) = 89

Pupils were asked 'what was the main thing you will remember from the lesson?'. The most commonly reported things were the benefits of breastfeeding for mother and baby (38%), followed by the specific health benefits of breastfeeding (18%) and the advantages of breastfeeding over bottlefeeding (16%).

Table 21: The main things pupils remembered from the lesson

| | n | % |
|--|----|----|
| Benefits of breastfeeding for baby/mother (unspecified) | 33 | 41 |
| Health benefits of breastfeeding | 14 | 18 |
| Breastmilk better than formula/breast is best | 13 | 16 |
| Pictures/cartoons/images | 10 | 13 |
| Shouldn't be embarrassed to breastfeed in public/breastfeeding is not embarrassing | 4 | 5 |
| Dangers of bottlefeeding | 2 | 3 |
| Breastfeeding is easy for the mother/enjoyable | 2 | 3 |
| History of breastfeeding | 2 | 3 |
| Other | 4 | 5 |

Base (n) = 80

When asked if there was anything that surprised them about the lesson, 28% of pupils reported that there wasn't really anything that surprised them. One third were surprised by the benefits for mother and baby (33%), and 17% remarked that they were surprised by the difference between the breastfed and bottlefed babies (shown in the picture of the twins).

Table 22: Aspects of the lesson that pupils found surprising

| | n | % |
|--|----|----|
| Benefits of breastfeeding | 26 | 33 |
| Nothing | 22 | 28 |
| Picture of the twins | 13 | 17 |
| Breastfeeding in public | 7 | 3 |
| Babies dying from bottlefeeding/dangers of bottlefeeding | 4 | 5 |
| Low rates of breastfeeding | 3 | 4 |
| Some of the pictures | 3 | 4 |
| Other | 4 | 5 |

Base (n) = 79

Only one pupil disagreed that they learnt more about breastfeeding from the lesson. Fourteen percent of pupils disagreed that they felt comfortable discussing breastfeeding during the lesson and 19% were unsure if they felt comfortable.

Table 23: Pupils' overall opinions of the lesson

| | Agree % | Unsure % | Disagree % | Base (n) |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| I learnt more about breastfeeding from the lesson | 94 | 5 | 1 | 88 |
| The lesson was boring | 11 | 8 | 81 | 88 |
| The lesson used language that I am used to | 81 | 14 | 6 | 88 |
| The lesson made me want to find out more information about breastfeeding | 52 | 38 | 10 | 87 |
| I felt comfortable discussing breastfeeding during the class | 67 | 19 | 14 | 86 |

Over two thirds of pupils (68%) reported that they have seen someone breastfeeding. Of those who have seen someone breastfeeding, 68% reported that this was in the home, while 14% had seen someone breastfeeding in a café or restaurant.

Table 24: Location of pupils having seen someone breastfeeding

| | n | % |
|---------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| In the home | 39 | 68 |
| In a café/restaurant | 8 | 14 |
| In a shop/supermarket/shopping centre | 5 | 9 |
| In church | 4 | 7 |
| On holiday | 2 | 4 |
| In town | 2 | 4 |
| Other | 6 | 11 |

Base (n) = 57

In total 91% of the 84 pupils who answered the question agreed that they would definitely think about breastfeeding if they had a baby.

Table 25: Pupils' views about future feeding intentions

| | Agree % | Disagree % | Base (n) |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| I would definitely think about breastfeeding if I were having a baby | 91 | 10 | 84 |
| I would definitely breastfeed if I had a baby | 68 | 33 | 77 |
| I don't think I would breastfeed if I had a baby | 23 | 77 | 75 |

Conclusions

By piloting the CD ROM resource *Breastfeeding awareness for schools*, the aim was to assess its suitability and usefulness as a teaching resource for use in post-primary schools.

Judging by feedback from teachers themselves even at the agreement trial stage, there was great enthusiasm for using a resource like this for teaching about breastfeeding. All teachers at this stage reported that they would be likely to use it. Before even using the resource, it was clear from feedback received at the agreement trials that teachers were keen to have a resource like this. Four teachers specifically mentioned that the CD ROM would be very useful to them.

In the six months after receiving the resource, 28 teachers were able to confirm that they had made use of it at least once (72% of those who received the resource). Four of the remaining teachers reported that they still intended to use it in the future.

In terms of the suitability of the resource for different age groups and subject areas, the resource was developed for use with pupils in Years 10 and 11. Feedback from the teachers confirmed that the resource was suitable for the age groups they used it with (Key Stage 4). Lessons 1 and 2 were also viewed as being appropriate for use with pupils above Year 11. Lesson 1 was viewed as being more suitable than Lesson 2 if the CD ROM was to be used for pupils below Year 10.

All teachers agreed that the resource used an appropriate level of language for the pupils they used it with, and 81% of pupils also agreed that it used language that they were used to. There was complete agreement amongst teachers that Lesson 1 was appropriate for Key Stage 4: however, one teacher reported that Lesson 2 was slightly too advanced for the class it was used with.

Feedback from the pupils who participated in the lessons confirms the teachers' views on the suitability for the age groups they were used with, as nine out of ten pupils (93%) confirmed that the lesson was suitable for people of their own age (Year 11). Just under half confirmed that it would also be suitable for older pupils.

The design of the CD ROM was seen as appealing by the pupils involved in the lessons. Over 80% of pupils rated the colours, design, cartoons and images as 'good'. When asked to identify what they enjoyed most, over 10% stated the videos and another 10% stated the cartoons and pictures.

Teachers were of the opinion that their pupils enjoyed the lessons. Findings from the pupils' feedback confirms this, with all but two pupils stating that they had enjoyed the lessons.

In terms of the practical use of the CD ROM as a teaching resource, all but one teacher was able to use the resource in its electronic format, the remaining teacher printed off the slides onto acetates to use them with their class.

Fourteen teachers at some point in their feedback mentioned that the lessons allowed for discussions to take place. These discussions, in some cases, led to the lessons taking longer to complete than the recommended time which was stated (30 minutes). However, only a couple of teachers stated that they were unable to complete the lessons in the time allocated. Guidance needs to be given for future use of the resource that all slides can be covered in the recommended time, but if extensive discussions are to take place, extra time should be allowed for this.

The content of this resource fulfills requirements relating to breastfeeding within the curriculum for the subjects of child development, home economics, health and social care and science.

Teachers confirmed that the resource was very suitable for use in child development and home economics. Other subjects which teachers recommended the resource could be used in were health and social care, personal, social and health education and for a smaller number of teachers, science. It should be noted that the CD ROM was not evaluated by science teachers and that few male pupils had the opportunity to evaluate the lessons.

References

- 1 World Health Organization. Global strategy on infant and young child feeding. Geneva: WHO, 2003.
- 2 Department of Health and Social Services. Breastfeeding strategy for Northern Ireland. Belfast: DHSSPS, 1999.
- 3 Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland. Breastfeeding education in the schools setting: a review of the literature. Belfast: HPA, 2006. Available online at www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/Resources/breastfeeding/pdfs/Breastfeeding%20school2006.pdf



Health
Promotion
Agency



Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland
18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast BT2 8HS.
Tel: 028 9031 1611 (Voice/Minicom). Fax: 028 9031 1711.
www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk