



World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi)

Call to Action on
Breastfeeding and Infant & Young
Child Feeding

ARMENIA COUNTRY REPORT

23 of December, 2015

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ARMENIA 2015



Call to Action on Breastfeeding and Infant & Young Child Feeding

INTRODUCTION

Following to the assessment of policy and programs in the Republic of Armenia regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding according to the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi), “Confidence” Health NGO launched the Armenia Assessment Report on 23 of December, during the joint meeting with Ministry of Health of Republic of Armenia, Department of Pediatrics at Yerevan State Medical University, Muratsan University Hospital Complex, members of Confidence Health NGO and Mother and Child Health Alliance.

Prior to this final Call for Action event, in order to inform the civil society organizations, health professionals, international agencies and general public about the results of the assessment of policy and programs regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding in Armenia the following activities were carried out by Confidence Health NGO:

- Press conference on “Gaps and recommendations regarding the policy and programs in the Republic of Armenia on Infant and Young Child Feeding”, held on 20 of November, 2015
- Illustration of important Infant and Young Child Feeding issues in 6 TV health programs named “Do not harm”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Confidence” Health NGO would like to thank the following organizations: BPNI / IBFAN Asia, MOH of RA, Department of Pediatrics N 1 of Yerevan State Medical University, Muratsan University Hospital Complex and Mother and Child Health (MCH) Alliance of Armenia

CALL FOR ACTION MEETING

On 23 of December, 2015 Confidence Health NGO launched the Armenia Assessment Report on policy and programs regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding during the joint meeting with Ministry of Health, Department of Pediatrics at Yerevan State Medical University and Muratsan University Hospital Complex, members of Confidence Health NGO and Mother and Child Health Alliance of Armenia. The total number of participants was 27.

The president of Confidence Health NGO Dr. Susanna Harutyunyan presented the gaps regarding the policy and programs in the Republic of Armenia on Infant and Young Child Feeding. Dr. Nane Mnatsakanyan and Lilit Avetisyan introduced the recommendations in order to bridge the gaps.

The head of Child Health Care Division Dr. Nune Pashayan made a speech and noted that thanks to the WBTi assessment the majority of recommendations are already included in the “National strategy for improving child nutrition for 2015-2020”, recently approved by the Government of Republic of Armenia. However, a number of recommendations such as on infant feeding in emergencies are not included in the strategy and no funds are allocated for this purpose.

The head of the Department of Pediatrics N 1 Prof. Nune Bagdasaryan noted that special two week cycles for clinical residents in pediatrics, pediatric subspecialties (pediatric endocrinology, neurology, surgery etc.), neonatologists, obstetrician-gynecologists, family doctors, as well as for practicing doctors in the sphere of mother and child health are proved by the YSMU authorities and currently the program of the cycle is being developed.

The participants of the meeting unanimously called upon Government of Armenia to take the following actions:

1. Establish a new National Breastfeeding Promotion Committee, which regularly meets, monitors and reviews the national program activities and links effectively with all other sectors like health, nutrition, information etc. and define clear terms of reference for the coordinator.

2. Adopt “The revised, updated and expanded for integrated care material published in 2009” for the country needs and reinforce the implementation of baby friendly initiatives countrywide (both BFHI and BFPI).
3. Finalize the set of regulations, inter alia develop regular monitoring mechanisms for all provisions of the “Law on Breastfeeding Promotion and Regulation of Marketing of Baby Food” and communicate to health workers, among them the responsibilities of health workers under the law, the scope, prohibitions and penalties of the law.
4. In collaboration with civil society organize monitoring of the national law using the monitoring methodology suggested by IBFAN/ICDC (adopted “Monitoring Kit 2015”).
5. Inform employers, including both in private and in informal / agriculture sector about their obligations regarding maternity protection under the national legislation and particularly under the law on “Breastfeeding promotion and regulation of infant food marketing”.
6. Regularly communicate maternity protection rights issues to pregnant women during antenatal classes.
7. Establish a university center for child growth and nutrition at the chair of pediatrics N 1 which will coordinate educational, medical and scientific activities in this field, including organization of special cycles for clinical residents, treatment of children presenting with nutrition and growth disorders, development of clinical guidelines and appropriate literature on management of nutrition and growth disorders, carry out research in the sphere.
8. Develop curricula for medical students, clinical residents and nurses, allocating enough teaching hours. Unify them for all available medical institutions, including universities and colleges in Yerevan and regions.
9. Organize special two week cycles on child nutrition and growth for practicing doctors in the sphere of mother and child health (pediatricians and family doctors) in the frame of continuing medical education courses at YSMU.

10. Include questions on availability of antenatal classes and performance of skin to skin contact in the list of criteria for assessment of hospitals.
11. Support the organization of MSGs and provide appropriate training and support to already existing and new MSGs.
12. Incorporate the information on the risks of artificial feeding in line with WHO/FAO Guidelines on preparation and handling of powdered infant formula in information and educational materials for both health workers and mothers on infant and young child nutrition.
13. Implement supportive supervision in available resource centers in Lori, Tavush, Aragatsotn and Syunik regions to insure the individual counseling and group education and counseling services on infant and young child feeding are available for all pregnant women and mothers of young infants.
14. Include adequate information on HIV and infant feeding in the program of training seminars conducted for health workers and for the representatives of governmental and non governmental institutions.
15. Develop standards on infant feeding in emergencies according to the IFE Operational Guidance and incorporate them in national strategy on infant and young child feeding, appoint person responsible for national coordination of infant and young child feeding in emergency situations with relevant partners such as the UN, donors, military and NGOs.
16. Develop appropriate orientation and training material on infant and young child feeding in emergencies and integrate it into pre-service and in-service training for emergency management and relevant health care personnel.
17. Develop and put into effect an emergency preparedness and response plan based on the practical steps listed in the Operational Guidance and allocate resources for its implementation.
18. Develop and implement mechanisms that insure more accurate data collection for official statistics.

PRESS CONFERENCE

On 20 of November, 2015 a press conference on “Gaps and recommendations regarding the policy and programs in the Republic of Armenia on Infant and Young Child Feeding” was held in Yerevan. Dr. Nane Mnatsakanyan and Dr. Susanna Harutyunyan introduced the important aspects of infant and young child feeding to the representatives of the media. The press conference was illustrated by TV news, radio programs, newspapers and electronic media. The part of TV news “Azdarar” is attached.



TV HEALTH PROGRAM “DO NOT HARM”

Important Infant and Young Child Feeding issues were illustrated in 6 TV programs named “Do not harm”. In collaboration with Ministry of Health of Armenia Confidence Health NGO participated in

developing a series of informational blocks during 6 programs using the minutes allocated for health promotion (social advertisement – free of charge). The programs were broadcasted during November - December. In each program 10-15 minutes were allocated for the following topics:

1. The nutrition of pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers (Presented by Prof. Gayane Sanasaryan, Head of the Maternal and reproductive health division at MOH, broadcasted on 11.11.15, available at:
<http://www.shanttv.com/am/programs/mi-vnasir/videogallery/15795/15796/>, minutes 26:32- 44:00)
2. Importance of breastfeeding (Presented by Ruzanna Mkrtchyan, breastfeeding consultant, member of Confidence Health NGO, broadcasted on 19.11.15, Available at:
<http://www.shanttv.com/am/programs/mi-vnasir/videogallery/15832/15833/>, minutes 16:58-33:42)
3. The Law of the RA on “Breastfeeding Promotion and Regulation of Marketing of Baby Food” (Presented by Dr. Susanna Harutyunyan, Lecturer at YSMU, President of Confidence Health NGO, broadcasted on 25.11.15, available at:
<http://www.shanttv.com/am/programs/mi-vnasir/videogallery/15850/15851/>, minutes 19:16-35:40)
4. Complementary Feeding (Presented by Dr. Lilit Avetisyan, lecturer at YSMU, member of Confidence Health NGO, broadcasted on 02.12.15, available at:
<http://www.shanttv.com/am/programs/mi-vnasir/videogallery/15873/15874/>, minutes 30:16- 41:57)
5. Nutrition of sick children (Presented by Dr. Nane Mnatsakanyan, lecturer at YSMU, member of Confidence Health NGO, broadcasted on 09.12.15, available at:
<http://www.shanttv.com/am/programs/mi-vnasir/videogallery/15899/15900/>, minutes 32:17-42:57)
6. Child nutrition and growth and development, Presented by Lilit Alexanyan, lecturer at YSMU, member of Confidence Health NGO, broadcasted on 16.12.15, available at:
<http://www.shanttv.com/am/programs/mi-vnasir/videogallery/15917/15918/>, minutes 15:14-25:25)