

LactaMap: An online lactation care support system for healthcare professionals

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Background The important health outcomes associated with breastfeeding for both mothers and infants are well known. Many of these outcomes are dose-related and extend beyond the duration of lactation (this means that the longer an infant is breastfed for, the greater the effect). Most women are unable to sustain lactation for the minimum recommended durations. The costs in both long and short-term health outcomes for mothers and their infants are significant and the result is an estimated global economic loss of more than US\$300 billion annually.

Purpose The World Health Organisation acknowledges that, "Substantial gaps in knowledge and skills to support breastfeeding are reported at all levels of healthcare staff". An online support system is designed, Lactamap, which aims to ensure evidence informed care to breastfeeding mothers and their infants. This will be achieved via implementation of Lactamap to health care professionals, including pharmacists across the globe.

Method LactaMap is an online lactation care support system designed to assist in the healthcare of mothers and infants experiencing breastfeeding difficulty. The LactaMap research group has developed evidence-informed information including a care pathway, over 100 clinical practice guidelines, 21 electronic/printable patient information documents and 15 articles defining normal function. LactaMap has now been formulated into a web platform that is easy to navigate so it can be used at the point of care. The online platform is being continually updated by the LactaMap research group enabling translation of new research soon after publication.

Findings LactaMap is being piloted with physicians in Australia, with international release to follow. Translation into multiple languages and additional versions of LactaMap aimed at supporting other healthcare professionals, including pharmacists and to support families are planned.

Conclusion Lactamap is an on-line evidence informed tool designed to provide excellence in lactation care, support and advice for health professionals and mothers and their infants. It is currently being successfully implemented into primary care settings in Australia.