

# Study into the booby traps of breastfeeding in the UK

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Australian researchers are embarking on a study of mums in the United Kingdom to discover if "guilt-tripping women" into breastfeeding is effective in persuading them to opt for breast over bottle.

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is a recognised leader in [breastfeeding](#) research and has already undertaken a study in Australia and the US.

Lead researcher Joy Parkinson, from QUT's School of Advertising Marketing and Public Relations, said women were often made to feel guilty for not breastfeeding their children when in fact a more supportive approach might be the answer.

Mrs Parkinson said a study by QUT of almost 1400 women in Australia and the United States had revealed support and encouragement from family and friends to persevere with breastfeeding rather than support from [health professionals](#) was the key to boosting breastfeeding rates.

"Breastfeeding rates in developed countries such as the UK, Australia and US are typically lower than World Health Organisation goals," she said.

"We are now seeking mums with babies less than 18 months old from across the UK to take part in the Feeding Your Bub survey.

Mrs Parkinson said women already understood that breastfeeding was

good for their baby, and what they needed were the tools to help them to breastfeed longer.

"By understanding the needs of breastfeeding mums in the UK we can work towards developing a global approach to encourage women to keep breastfeeding," she said.

"Breastfeeding isn't a simple behaviour. It isn't a case of if you like it, you can do it. It is much more complex.

"Governments and breastfeeding advocates across the globe have tended to focus on a campaign of fear and guilt to push women to breastfeed and in the UK it's no different."

"What we have found in the US and Australia is that preaching the benefits of breastfeeding, is like preaching to the converted and does not increase breastfeeding duration rates."

Mrs Parkinson said her study revealed mums required personal support and encouragement to stick with breastfeeding, especially when the going got tough.

"Results from the US and Australian study indicated that support from the baby's father was an important aspect in helping women breastfeed, with more than 88 per cent of [women](#) surveyed indicating that they received lots of support from their partner," she said.

"Only 31 per cent indicated they received support from a health professional."

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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