Breastfeeding may protect against postpartum relapses in MS

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(HealthDay)—Breastfeeding may be protective against postpartum

relapses in multiple sclerosis (MS), according to a review and meta-analysis published online Dec. 9 in *JAMA Neurology*.

Kristen M. Krysko, M.D., from the University of California in San Francisco, and colleagues conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis to examine the correlation between breastfeeding and postpartum MS relapses. A total of 462 unique citations were identified and 24 studies with 2,974 women satisfied eligibility criteria; 16 were included in a quantitative meta-analysis.

The researchers found that compared with a reference of nonbreastfeeding, the pooled summary odds ratio for the correlation of breastfeeding with postpartum relapse was 0.63. Across four studies that reported this finding, the pooled adjusted hazard ratio was 0.57. Moderate heterogeneity was seen (I^2 = 48 percent), which was due to variability in the prepregnancy relapse rate, duration of postpartum follow-up, and publication year. In studies of exclusive versus nonexclusive breastfeeding, a stronger correlation was seen, although an association was demonstrated for both. A consistent protective outcome of breastfeeding was seen in sensitivity analyses, which included only moderate-quality studies.

"It is reasonable to educate women about the potential protective effect of breastfeeding on postpartum relapses and support their decision to breastfeed for benefit to both the mother and newborn as recommended by the World Health Organization," the authors write.

Two authors disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

More information: Abstract/Full Text (subscription or payment may be required)

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