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Benefits of breastfeeding on cognitive development

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Breastfeeding has clear short term and long term benefits that have been researched over the years. The aim of this study is to assess different barriers to breastfeeding and to determine if there is a significant difference in the cognitive function, including the IQ of a breastfed infant versus formula fed. Research reveals that breastfeeding for greater than six months leads to improved cognitive development and this is evidenced by higher IQ scores and educational attainment. However, despite the known benefits of breastfeeding and study findings conclusive of the positive impacts of breast milk, there still remain many barriers. These barriers, such as medical concerns related to breastfeeding and social barriers, were discussed in the research. In conclusion, breastfeeding continuation for 12 months should be promoted and supported by healthcare professionals as it increases educational attainment and earning ability. Further public health efforts to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding should be encouraged. Investment in strategies to promote longer breastfeeding duration and exclusivity may be cost-effective. I have conducted an integrative review of the literature researched. I have selected and applied findings from articles that best fit my PICOT question with evidence supporting that breastfeeding leads to greater cognitive function than formula supplementation.