



Benalla Breastfeeding SMS System

Benalla Health, Tomorrow Today Foundation and Benalla Rural City in partnership aim to improve breastfeeding rates in Benalla. An automatic breastfeeding SMS system was designed and trialled in 2017 to increase breastfeeding rates at 3 months.

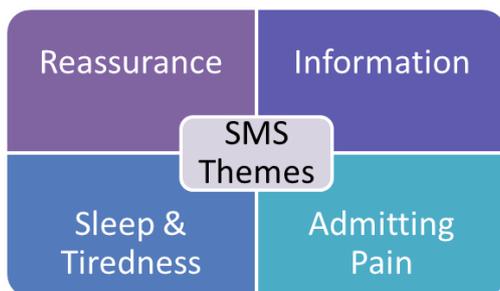
The project was based on the successful QUT MumBubConnect study which found that a fully automated text message system improved breastfeeding duration and empowered women to actively resolve breastfeeding issues.

The goal of the system was to increase the number of Benalla mothers who breastfed at 3 months.

Objectives were to increase mothers self efficacy in breastfeeding and confidence to seek support from services.

Designing the SMS's

In late 2016 2 focus groups were held with Benalla mother. They were asked what messages they would have liked to receive during their time breastfeeding. 4 themes were identified;



A series of SMS's were developed to be sent out to mothers 8 weeks post hospital discharge after giving birth. Each SMS had a supportive Message with contact details of breastfeeding services.

At their first visit with Maternal and Child Health, participants signed consent forms and were added onto the system.

Results

As of the end of June 2017 28 women had signed onto the system.

In May 2017 phone interviews were conducted with 12 participants that had completed the 8 weeks of SMS's.

Since leaving hospital:

- ⇒ 75% continued exclusive breastfeeding
- ⇒ 75% felt more confident to continue breastfeeding
- ⇒ 92% felt more encouraged to breastfeed
- ⇒ 92% felt connected to services
- ⇒ 33% contacted services mentioned in the SMS's, mostly Maternal and Child Health.



Overall feedback was positive. "I got the message telling me to keep feeding]before the child got over hungry. I took that on and kept going," "That message stuck in my head and has kept me going when I've felt down," "Hopefully it can continue for all new mums in Benalla," "it's a great program."

Based on feedback, more SMS's will be sent in the 8 week period, particularly between 1-2 weeks and 5-6 weeks. The SMS system will also be initiated by midwives on hospital discharge. Due to the positive feedback it will continue into 2017.

For more information contact Benalla Health on (30) 57614500

