



Interactive CD aims to combat poor UK breastfeeding rates

An educational CD-ROM which aims to have a direct impact on breastfeeding rates has been released by OCB Media with the support of Medela, producer of technologically advanced breast pumps.

Entitled *Breastfeeding*, the interactive CD-ROM is an extensively detailed, easy-to-use training aid targeted at healthcare professionals who offer practical support to breastfeeding mothers. *Breastfeeding* provides an A-Z educational guide, from the historical background to the latest scientific studies, as well as practical support and useful guidance to pass on to mums. The wealth of information is presented in an interactive format with plenty of supporting images and videos.

Sir David Hall, Emeritus Professor of Paediatrics University of Sheffield and Professor of Paediatrics University of Cape Town, says: "Mothers are often given conflicting advice by medical and nursing personnel who may be too ready to advise abandoning attempts at breastfeeding. The early days of breastfeeding are critical and unless a mother receives confident, consistent advice there is a high probability that she will give up within the first two weeks."

The CD-ROM, which is endorsed by the NNA and Bliss, will not only be beneficial to midwives, health visitors and breastfeeding counsellors but also to neonatal nurses, children's nurses, general practitioners, dieticians, speech therapists, physicians and paediatrician.

Available to purchase from OCB Media online: www.ocbmedia.com/shop

Handy checks to help parents decide if a baby is ill

The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths has unveiled its new-look *Baby Check* booklet – available to download at www.fsid.org.uk/babycheck09.html.

Baby Check can help worried parents decide whether their baby needs urgent medical help by scoring the severity of a baby's symptoms. It contains scores for 19 symptoms parents should check, including fluids taken, vomiting, dryer than normal nappies, awareness and wheezing.

It was developed from a four-year project analysing the signs and symptoms of illness in over 1,000 infants under six months old. The accuracy and acceptability of the booklet has been tested in several field trials.

FSID Director Joyce Epstein says: "Studies have highlighted the problem of parents failing to recognise how ill a child is and the importance of using scoring systems to determine seriousness of symptoms."

Baby Check may also be useful for junior doctors, who may have trouble recognising illness in young babies. Health professionals working with vulnerable parents can request hard copies of the booklet by contacting the FSID helpline on 020 7233 2090.



GOSH family team win leadership award

A service set up by Great Ormond Street Hospital to support families on the hospital's PICU and NICU has been given the 'Leadership for Improvement award' at the NHS London Health and Social Care Awards. Family Liaison Services provides emotional and practical support to families by offering services such as the Parent Telephone Support Network, which is manned by parents. The award recognises leaders in the NHS that have a positive impact on patients, families and staff. They may now be put forward to the national finals to be held in July.

Christine Pierce, GOSH Consultant Intensivist, says: "We are very proud of the Family Liaison Service, they were the only paediatric service to be recognised with an award at the ceremony and thoroughly deserve it."

Cystic fibrosis knowledge centre available online

EPG Media, provider of e-communication solutions and digital publishing for the health sector, has produced an interactive cystic fibrosis knowledge centre at www.epgonline.org, its web-based medical education resource for healthcare professionals.

Cystic fibrosis is one of the more common, life-shortening, inherited diseases among Caucasians. Research and better treatment mean that patients live to a median age of nearly 37 years based on 2005 data. However, while management and prognosis has improved over the past 50 years, it is still a progressive disease with no cure and results in early death.

Cystic fibrosis is a multisystem disease and treatment must be multidisciplinary. The cystic fibrosis knowledge centre is designed to provide information and support to the wide range of health professionals involved in the treatment and



care of cystic fibrosis sufferers. Detailed information is provided on management of the lung, through various therapies and approaches, as well as the digestive system, liver and gall bladder and pancreas.

The cystic fibrosis knowledge centre is the latest addition to the EPG Online library of more than twenty knowledge centres. To access the knowledge centres, healthcare professionals will be required to register for free or login with their EPG username and password.

Underfunding in midwifery services highlighted in *The Times*

A report by *The Times* reveals that two thirds of NHS trusts are unable to cover the cost of providing maternity services as the birthrate rises. Underfunding of midwifery and obstetrics care has produced deficits that run into millions of pounds in some trusts. Money is being taken from other hospital departments to cover the shortfall. Meanwhile, other trusts have up to £15 million of maternity funding remaining on their balance sheets at the end of the financial year.

The figures, obtained by *The Times* under the Freedom of Information Act, come as statistics show that the birthrate is at its highest level for 36 years.

An extra £330 million pledged by Government to improve maternity care over three years may be wasted due to inefficient NHS accounting or could be diverted to fund loss-making services, the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) says.

The funding was announced in January last year. But anecdotal reports to the RCM suggest half of local heads of midwifery in England have yet to see the extra money make an impact.

Professor Cathy Warwick, RCM general secretary, comments: "In April 2007 the Government named its blueprint for maternity services *Maternity Matters*, and guaranteed that by the end of this year the NHS in England would deliver a "world-class maternity service" to all new mothers. The picture is looking patchy. We are now into our seventh year of a baby boom. The share of the health service's budget spent on maternity has dropped from 3% in 1997 to 2% in the most recent figures.

"What *The Times* has discovered is that many trusts have not been getting enough money to run their maternity services. Many have had to subsidise the service with money from other areas. This situation is hopefully being rectified, with the Government increasing the money trusts get under the "Payment by Results" system for the work they do.

"I fear we will see cuts to frontline services, including maternity care. Maternity services did not get the full benefit of extra NHS investment over the past decade."



Going Home Pack from Bliss

Special care baby charity Bliss is launching a Going Home Pack sponsored by Fairy and Pampers for parents of sick and premature babies. From July, packs will be sent to neonatal units quarterly for staff to give out to families as they leave. The pack contains an array of information including a booklet on weaning, breastfeeding premature babies, financial advice for families and facts for fathers. There will be a voucher booklet full of offers from companies like Fairy, Pampers, Mothercare and Mother & Baby magazine.

To order 0207 378 1122, more information at www.bliss.org.uk/goinghomepack



Rijul Sudhir, first patient through the doors when Royal Manchester Children's Hospital opened, with mum Jaya and father Prem Kormath.

Royal Manchester Children's Hospital opens its doors

The largest single-site children's hospital in the UK accepted its first patient in early June. Located in Manchester's Oxford Road, the development took five years to complete and is part of a £500m PFI scheme commissioned by Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, delivered in partnership with Catalyst Healthcare.

There will be a paediatric A&E facility at the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, giving children and parents access to twice

the emergency space available previously. For patients in the north Manchester area a children's A&E opened in June at North Manchester General Hospital, replacing one at Booth Hall Children's Hospital.

The ICU will be home to 17 beds with the provision to open up to four more if required. The 'super hospital' expects to treat 35,000 patients a year, with specialisms in renal transplant, metabolic and complex spinal care, enabling children to be transferred from across the UK.

UK adopts growth charts based on breastfed babies

All newborn babies and children up to four years old will have their growth measurements plotted on charts developed for the DH by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, based on the World Health Organisation's work. They replace current measures based predominately on babies fed with formula milk.

Research shows that breastfed babies tend to gain weight at a healthier pace and are less likely to become obese in later life. The new charts will play an important role in establishing breastfeeding as the norm and will be included in the Personal Child Health Records, which parents of every newborn are given. They will help parents and healthcare professionals identify children at early risk of obesity and provide important reassurance for parents of breastfed babies, who are likely to gain weight more slowly.

The new charts include a chart specifically for premature babies.