

## Summer Undergraduate Research Programme 2021

Project Number & Title:	<p><b>Project 8</b></p> <p>Laid back breastfeeding: Knowledge, attitudes and practices of midwives and student midwives in Ireland</p>
Project Details	<p>Ireland has one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the world (National Women and Infants Health Programme 2020) with many women that do breastfeed encountering problems, such as sore nipples and babies who have difficulty latching on (McGuinness et al. 2020; Brown 2016; Kent et al. 2015). This often leads to introduction of formula, a reduction in exclusive breastfeeding on discharge and greater breastfeeding cessation overall. (Brown 2016; Cooke et al. 2003)</p> <p>Laid back breastfeeding is a ‘hands off’ approach where the mother relaxes into a semi-reclined position with baby resting tummy down, hands free on her body, without interference. This helps the newborn’s natural reflexes and the mother’s instincts to work together. In addition to reducing problems such as sore and cracked nipples and helping the infant to get a deeper, more stable latch this approach enables women to practice and attain skills themselves, encouraging breastfeeding self-efficacy rather than midwives acting as the experts positioning babies.</p> <p>Laid back breastfeeding is a position more likely to lead to successful breastfeeding and is recommended by many organisations, such as La Leche League, the Association of Lactation Consultants of Ireland, the Lactation Consultants of Great Britain, the National Childbirth Trust as well as the HSE. It is also recommended in Our Lady’s Children’s Hospital Crumlin (Harris 2018)</p>

and as part of the BFI 20-hour Breastfeeding Course (The Breastfeeding Committee for Canada 2018). Mainstream breastfeeding literature introduced laid back breastfeeding over a decade ago (Mohrbacher 2010; Wiessinger et al. 2010; Watson Genna 2010) and it then began to appear in midwifery journals (Batacan 2010; Colson 2012).

More recent research (Milinco et al. 2020) has shown this position to significantly reduce breast problems such as sore and cracked nipples, engorgement and mastitis and increase maternal comfort (Wang n.d. - in review). It also has advantages for midwives, such as saving time and eliminating the need for detailed latching instructions (Colson 2012) as well as reducing job-related back, neck, and shoulder pain from bending over to assist with breastfeeding (Mohrbacher 2020). However, anecdotal evidence suggests that this position is not often suggested to mothers and the practice of using the laid back breastfeeding position has not been universally adopted.

**Project Objectives** - To identify the current knowledge, attitudes and practices of midwives and student midwives about using the laid back breast feeding position in Ireland. Original data on knowledge, attitudes, and practices about laid back breastfeeding by the participating midwives and student midwives in Ireland will be highlighted.

**Method:** The proposed study is a multi site survey. A quantitative descriptive design will be utilised. A cross-sectional survey will explore the knowledge, attitudes and specific practices of hospital-based midwives and student midwives in relation to using the laid back breastfeeding position.

	<p><b>Sampling;</b> The recruitment strategy will involve 4 different sources of participants.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Three hospitals within the RCSI North East Hospital Group, namely Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Cavan General Hospital, and the Rotunda Hospital.</li> <li>2. The INMO website Nurse2Nurse.ie which is accessible to members of the INMO  and JISCe mail group.</li> <li>3. Student midwives will be recruited via e mail</li> </ol> <p><b>Data analysis</b> will be conducted using SPSS descriptive and inferential statistics.</p> <p><b>Measurable Outcomes / Deliverables –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The data will identify the current practice in an Irish context, related to recommended breastfeeding positions and provide unique information about the use of evidence-based practice.</li> <li>• This information will be a valuable addition to the body of knowledge about midwifery practice in Ireland</li> <li>• Knowledge will be shared with participating midwifery units to help reinforce good practice and identify areas that may require educational input.</li> <li>• Strengthened collaboration between linked hospitals Cavan, Drogheda and Rotunda Hospital.</li> <li>• Presentation of the results to the clinical staff in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital.</li> <li>• Submission to an International Journal for consideration of publication</li> </ul> <p>To date the study has been submitted to the DkIT ethics committee who have approved the study pending HSE approval to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> May.</p>
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	An ethics interview has been arranged by the Rotunda Hospital May 18 <sup>th</sup> . The other clinical areas involved, the INMO and the JisC e mail group have agreed to distribute the survey.
Profile of Candidate	Undergraduate with strong academic record from 3 <sup>rd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> year midwifery.
Project Supervisors	<b>Research Centre/Group</b> – Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Dundalk Institute of Technology  <b>Supervisory Team</b> – Dr. Patricia Larkin  All enquiries to <a href="mailto:patricia.larkin@dkit.ie">patricia.larkin@dkit.ie</a>
Duration	6 weeks
Number of Positions Available	1
Amount Awarded (per candidate)	Weekly stipend of €150 (tax free)
How to Apply	Each applicant should submit the following documents by email to <a href="mailto:mary.matthews@dkit.ie">mary.matthews@dkit.ie</a> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CV including academic transcripts</li> <li>• A 300 word statement as to why you are a suitable candidate for this project.</li> </ul> <p>Please state clearly in the subject line of your covering email the abstract title and project reference number.</p> <p><i>An applicant may apply for more than one programme, but each application must be made separately.</i></p>