0.78; 95% confidence interval [CI]: 0.63–0.96) irrespective of combination with asthma, sensitization to common allergens, or parental allergic disease. This decreased risk was most evident for children with onset of eczema during the first 2 years persisting to 4 years (OR: 0.59; 95% CI: 0.45–0.77). Among children with early-onset eczema, irrespective of persistency, followed by late onset of asthma or early-onset asthma, irrespective of persistency, followed by late-onset eczema to 4 years, a protective effect of breastfeeding was also seen (OR: 0.48; 95% CI: 0.30–0.76).

CONCLUSIONS. Breastfeeding ≥4 months reduces the risk for eczema and asthma to 4 years of age.

REVIEWER COMMENTS. Many studies to date have shown that breastfeeding confers a protective effect against early atopic diseases including eczema. This is yet another argument to support breastfeeding.

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Infantile Eczema at One Month of Age Is Associated With Cord Blood Eosinophilia and Subsequent Development of Atopic Dermatitis and Wheezing Illness Until Two Years of Age


PURPOSE OF THE STUDY. To determine if a correlation exists between the prevalence of neonatal skin eruptions at 1 month of age and the later development of atopic dermatitis. In addition, the authors sought to determine if the presence of cord blood eosinophils correlated with the development of later skin disease.

STUDY POPULATION. One hundred five newborn infants born by normal vaginal delivery in Mitoyo General Hospital (Kagawa, Japan) from May 1987 to March 1989.

METHODS. The cord blood eosinophil count was measured at the time of delivery. The neonates were examined at 1 (all subjects) and 24 (98 subjects) months of age by a doctor who was unaware of the cord blood eosinophil count. The subjects’ histories of allergic symptoms or physician-diagnosed wheezing bronchitis or asthma during the first 8 years of life were also determined by direct examination or interviews with the guardians (67 subjects). The age of each subject at the onset of the allergic symptoms was determined. Skin eruptions at 1 month of age were classified into 4 categories: (1) infantile eczema; (2) seborrheic dermatitis; (3) intertrigo; or (4) diaper dermatitis. The diagnosis of atopic dermatitis was made according to the criteria by Hanifin and Rajka (Hanifin JM, Rajka G. Diagnostic features of atopic dermatitis. Arch Dermatol Venereol. 1980;92:44–47), and each rash was defined carefully by appearance.
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