**PROJECT:** Evaluation of the use of Motivational Interviewing to Improve Breastfeeding Maintenance: a Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial

**CLIENT:** Rural Clinical School, Faculty of Medicine, UNSW

**TYPE:** CATI telephone survey, data management, assistance with statistical analysis, publishing

Hunter Research Foundation (HRF) was involved in a cluster randomised controlled trial which recruited 15 rural family doctor’s offices and breastfeeding women living in two regional centres in rural NSW to test the effectiveness of a primary care support intervention for improving breastfeeding maintenance. The intervention was conducted in the primary care setting of general practice, in the workrooms of the practice nurses. Eight practices formed the intervention group and seven formed the control group.

The practice nurses who provided the intervention used a specially designed motivational flowchart to speak to the mothers when they brought their child for immunisation at 2, 4 and 6 months. The nurses also attended preparatory workshops on breastfeeding management, counselling skills, motivational interviewing and reflective practice and were given resources and support. Breastfeeding rates were measured at 4 and 6 months.

**METHODOLOGY / SKILLS**

The data collection involved blind interviews with mother’s, approximately 4 months and 6 months after the birth of their baby. HRF interviewers conducted the telephone interviews and achieved a 100% response rate for both interviews meaning there were no refusals but some mothers were not contactable and some were ineligible, as they had never commenced breastfeeding (4 month: 423 out of 445 mothers; 6 month: 321 out of 347 mothers).

HRF Statistician Russ Redford and Senior Research Fellow Shanthi Ramanathan also assisted the client with combining the data that was collected via a mail survey, clean and prepare the data for analysis and conduct a regression analysis to compare both any breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding at both 4 and 6 months between the control and intervention groups.

The study was published in *Acta Paediatrica* -


**HRF PROJECT CONTACT**

Shanthi Ramanathan Senior Research Fellow P (02) 4041 5515 E shanthi@hrf.com.au