

Exclusive Breastfeeding

Interpretations and Limits in Burkina Faso

Chiara ALFIERI
Armande K. SANOU
Odette KY-ZERBO
Alice DESCLAUX



UMR 145
Sida et maladies associées



JE 2424
Centre de Recherche
Cultures, Santé, Sociétés (CRéCSS)

Introduction

- PMTCT programmes recommend either exclusive breastfeeding with early weaning or formula feeding
- In Burkina Faso most women choose exclusive breastfeeding
- Local practices encourage predominant breastfeeding



UMR 145

Centre de Recherche Cultures, Santé, Sociétés



Objectives

- **Understand:**
 - how HIV-positive mothers perceive the term 'exclusive'
 - their representations and interpretations
- **Describe:** practices women adopt in order to retain exclusive BF
- **Analyse:** limits and difficulties met by HIV-positive mothers



UMR 145

Centre de Recherche Cultures, Santé, Sociétés



Methodology

- Qualitative study on 45 HIV-positive mothers within:
 - a research project (Kesho Bora)
 - the MSF' AIDS project (Ouagadougou)
 - PMTCT national programme
 - a PLWHA support association
- Ouagadougou & Bobo-Dioulasso
- Babies between 1 and 3 months (1st interview), 7 and 12 months (2nd interview)



UMR 145

Centre de Recherche Cultures, Santé, Sociétés



The cultural context

- **Knowledge and practices about child care:**
 - A changing context
 - From the authority of older female relatives to 'modern practices'
 - Syncretic practices
 - Importance of water in mothers' perceptions and practices



UMR 145

Centre de Recherche Cultures, Santé, Sociétés



Water in infant care (1)

- At birth, water is used to avoid colostrum
- Then, water is used:
 - as a vaccine (tisanes, Koranic verses, etc.)
 - to quench infant 's thirst
 - for infant bathing and as tisane



UMR 145

Centre de Recherche Cultures, Santé, Sociétés



Water in infant care (2)

- Water is used to strengthen babies
- Water is given to babies when they are hungry or when they cry
- Many types of water, according to the environment and the babies' needs
- Water is overall considered positively: it strengthens babies and allows them to grow up



UMR 145

Centre de Recherche Cultures, Santé, Sociétés



HIV-positive mothers' experiences

- Criticized for not giving water to their babies
- 4 different attitudes:
 - Some mothers believe that giving water will not do any harm to their babies
 - Some mothers simply cannot put EBF into practice because of their family context
 - Some of them do it only when they are left alone with their babies
 - A few mothers manage to adopt EBF



UMR 145

Centre de Recherche Cultures, Santé, Sociétés



HIV-positive mothers' strategies

- Implementation of 'Partial EBF'
- Try to be left alone with their babies
- Avoid entrusting their babies to other women
- Avoid mothers' and babies' social integration



UMR 145

Centre de Recherche Cultures, Santé, Sociétés



Limits to EBF

- Criticisms from other women
- Modern drugs
- Traditional remedies
- Although the recommendations about EBF are making their way through local communities, EBF is still associated with HIV



UMR 145

Centre de Recherche Cultures, Santé, Sociétés



Discussion & Conclusion

- Even when it proves feasible, exclusive breastfeeding is usually difficult for most women
- EBF is the subject of permanent ongoing negotiations
- 'Partial exclusive breastfeeding' still prevails in these contexts
- How water is looked at: a major issue



UMR 145

Centre de Recherche Cultures, Santé, Sociétés



Acknowledgements



We would like to thank the members of the Kesho Bora Project in Bobo-Dioulasso for their hospitality and assistance during the interviews within our survey. We are also grateful to the staff of the MSF's AIDS Project in Ouagadougou and to those who work at the AED Association in Bobo-Dioulasso.

Partners: Centre Muraz, Kesho Bora Project.



UMR 145

Centre de Recherche Cultures, Santé, Sociétés

