



Mothers Ask for Breastfeeding Facilities and Feeding Information
HKIYCNA supported regulations on labeling for food under 36 months
Calls for public engagement to address mothers' views

(Hong Kong: 16 February 2012) The Hong Kong Infant and Young Child Nutrition Association (“HKIYCNA”) today announced the result of a public opinion poll jointly conducted by the University of Hong Kong Public Opinion Programme.

Insufficient milk supply the main difficulty in breastfeeding

Among the 507 survey respondents who are local mothers raising at least one child at or below the age of three, 83% have breastfed their babies, with an average duration of 5.3 months. When asked about why they did not / stopped breastfeeding, insufficient milk supply (36.4%) was found to be the most common reason. Others also cited poor health condition (17.7%), end of maternity leave (14.4%) or need to work / lack of time (12%) as hindering factors. Hong Kong mothers considered the following initiatives most helpful in encouraging breastfeeding: (a) more breastfeeding facilities in public (33.1%); (b) more public education on advantages of breastfeeding (29.0%); (c) more breastfeeding facilities at workplace (20.3%) and (d) lengthen the maternity leave (17.6%). The above findings clearly reflected that socio-economic support is important to help to increase the breastfeeding rate in Hong Kong.

Mothers confirm their need for information on infant milk formula (IMF) from various sources; the Association supported regulations on labeling for food under 36 months

Mothers who cannot breastfeed or choose not to rely on various sources of information, namely: (a) medical practitioners (52.5%); (b) infant milk formula manufacturers (32.1%); and (c) the Government (29.0%). Information from various providers is equally significant in helping them to make the informed choice.

As the second most important information provider for mothers, we believe a standardized approach is important to ensure accurate information can be provided to mothers. Therefore, the Association supports regulation on labeling for food for children below 36 months of age according to international standards. HKIYCNA is of view that an evidence-based food labeling system is key for Hong Kong parents to



trust the information they receive and therefore make informed and optimum choices for their babies and that it could only be achieved through legislation, and not a voluntary mechanism.

Majority thinks prohibiting marketing activities of IMF of 6 months or above unnecessary

The survey also probed into consumers' preferences and found that information from various providers is equally significant in helping them to make informed choice. About seventy percent (69.6%) disagreed that the Government should be the only information provider while 28.5% supported this statement. On the other hand, majority of the interviewed mothers (80.3%) stated that prohibiting the marketing activities of infant milk formula of 6 months or above is unnecessary, whereas 14.6% claimed this is required.

HKIYCNA calls for public engagement of the Government Code

HKIYCNA believes that the industry, the Government and NGOs should work together to develop and implement measures that help to educate mothers and create a favourable environment to encourage breastfeeding through at least 6 months. In relation to the upcoming Marketing Code of Breastmilk Substitutes, HKIYCNA urges the Government to take reference of best practices of other developed jurisdictions and international standards, as well as adapting to the unique local circumstances. Meanwhile, due process in form of an open, transparent and extensive public engagement is necessary to ensure parents and stakeholders' views are properly addressed.

About The Hong Kong Infant and Young Child Nutrition Association

The Hong Kong Infant and Young Child Nutrition Association (HKIYCNA/the Association) is formed by 6 founding members, namely, Abbott Laboratories Limited, Danone Baby Nutrition (HK) Limited, FrieslandCampina (Hong Kong) Limited; Mead Johnson Nutrition (Hong Kong) Limited, Nestlé Hong Kong Limited and Wyeth (H.K.) Limited (Wyeth is now a part of Pfizer Inc). It was registered under Societies Ordinance in May 2011.

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**Hong Kong
Infant and Young Child
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