

Babies Rooming with Mothers Raises Eyebrows



An initiative to promote breastfeeding launched in 1991 by the World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund is beginning to impact on infant care in maternity wards in Boston and in ways that tired mothers are not pleased about.

The Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) was launched as part of a global effort to implement practices that protect, promote and support breastfeeding by having babies 'room' with new mothers.

To this end, several hospitals in and around Boston do not offer the usual nursery facilities instead stipulating that newborns stay in the same room as their mothers in order to bond.

But a report in the *Boston Globe* says that mothers are exhausted following childbirth and have to nurse their babies immediately, giving them little time to recover.

"Mothers need to recover from the trauma of delivery, and if they can't do it at the hospital, where is that supposed to happen?" said one new mother in the report.

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Although the BFHI appeared 25 years ago, hospitals in the U.S. have been slow to respond. However, the Centres for Disease Control movement aimed at promoting breastfeeding, bonding, and parenting skills by rooming mothers and healthy newborns together after childbirth is changing this.

The Joint Commission, a national accrediting body, now takes breastfeeding rates into account in its evaluations of hospitals.

Many postpartum experts think that nurseries, which give new mothers a chance to recover, is an unnatural way of providing care.

Patients disagree with the move towards scrapping the maternity ward nursery. Frontline nurses in particular said short breaks in a nursery would not be harmful for breast-feeding in the long run, and that reprieve is essential for mothers to fully recuperate and even avoid post-partum depression.

The National Partnership for Women and Families, a nonprofit policy group in Washington, said that discussion and choice around the issue are necessary.

At the other end of the scale, some new mothers said that having their newborn with them immediately following birth increased their confidence in caring for them.

Source: [WHO, The Boston Globe](#)

Image Source:PRI

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