The facilitators and barriers to exclusive breastfeeding in Northeast of Thailand

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The six month exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) rate in the Northeast of Thailand has significantly decreased while in other regions of Thailand it has not. It is unknown what the cause of this decrease was or what could improve the situation. The aim of this study was to identify perceived barriers and facilitators to six month EBF in Northeast Thailand of the main stakeholders, namely breastfeeding mothers. Six focus group discussions comprising of 30 participants were conducted. The eligibility criteria for participants in the focus groups was Northeastern-Thai mothers aged 20 to 40 years with children aged between four and six months and currently breastfeeding their children. The participants were recruited through self-selection sampling from Khon Kaen Hospital, Num-phong Hospital and private hospitals in Khon Kaen, Thailand. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data. Three themes were identified: knowledge and belief, environment, and support. Most mothers mentioned that knowledge about the advantages of breast milk and how to produce breastmilk were facilitators to six month EBF. Relating to the support theme, the use of social media emerged as a facilitator of six month EBF. The identified facilitators and barriers can inform the development of relevant intervention(s) to improve the six month EBF rate in the Northeast of Thailand, as well as in other countries.

Biography
Thiwawan Thepha is a PhD candidate of University od Aberdeen, School of Medicine and Dentistry. She is a Lecturer at Department of Midwifery, Khon Kaen University Thailand. She is running project about exclusive breastfeeding for six months in Northeast Thailand. She has an experience of more than 10 years about midwife and breastfeeding and would like to share and exchange her experience in order to develop exclusive breastfeeding situation, especially in Thailand.

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