|  |
| --- |
| **Community leadership evaluating policies for breastfeeding protection, promotion and support: WBTi Australia** |
| **Background/Objectives**In 2003, the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) developed an easy to use policy assessment tool, The World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi). This was an important pioneer initiative seeking to develop indicators for helping inform policy makers to scale-up countries’breastfeeding programmes. It was designed to enable the systematic analysis of a nation’s progress in relation to the principles of the World Health Organization/UNICEF (WHO/UNICEF) *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding*. The assessment has been used by 84 mostly low or middle income countries around the world, to benchmark their current infant feeding policies and programs.This research aimed to test the usefulness of WBTi assessment for high income countries such as Australia, and to influence policy formulation in Australia.**Methods**We describe the background of the WBTi, how the WBTi Australia assessment was conducted, and the current results for Australia. The presentation will also include how assessment results have been used thus far, including in engaging with policymakers. **Results**In September 2018, academics, health professionals and breastfeeding and public health advocates attended a training workshop at the ANU on conducting a WBTi assessment for Australia. A core group was formed, data was collected and scoring completed from October 2017 to April 2018. The report was finalised in May 2018. Australia scored well on indicators such as parental leave policies. Low scores resulted from lack of a nationally coordinated approach. Plans for future advocacy and reassessment are being developed and implemented. **Discussion**The WBTi Australia is an important community-based health promotion initiative which has been informing public policy formulation on the Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy. **Keywords** health promotion, breastfeeding, public policy, participatory action research  |