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| **Counting human milk and breastfeeding in GDP and in a well-being framework** |
| **Background/Objectives**There is heightened pressure to make GDP more relevant and useful as an indicator of economic wellbeing. The OECD ‘dashboard’ approach to the GDP reform agenda promotes use of indicators to measure well-being. Against the background of New Zealand’s initiatives to adopt an inclusive wellbeing framework, this paper addresses official and public discussion on reforming how economic progress is measured, through a focus on encompassing human milk and breastfeeding in GDP, and in child well-being indicators. It responds to feminist critiques of GDP, such as that by Waring (1988), which call for better accounting for women’s economic contributions, including to human capital creation and to conserving the environment. The objective is to show how valuing lactation work, human milk and breastfeeding within the SNA system could provide more conceptually sound, economically realistic, and inclusive GDP accounts, whilst also being compatible with a well-being framework.**Methods**Using data from several countries, calculation of the economic value of human milk and breastfeeding is estimated, using conventional epidemiological, economic and national accounting valuation techniques, within the internationally accepted SNA framework. Established well-being indicators are reviewed to identify where breastfeeding fits within key international indicators of child well-being.**Results**Data on breastfeeding rates is available for many countries. Combined with price information which can be used to impute market values of human milk and breastfeeding, data on breastfeeding rates can be used to measure the value of breastmilk (and breastfeeding) in GDP (and the SNA system). Measures and estimates of the contribution of breastfeeding to human capital, and to protecting natural capital are also available. Data on breastfeeding is already used in globally accepted indicators to rank countries, such as in UNICEF reporting on child health and wellbeing. Incorporating Unpaid reproductive and lactation work is absent in many gender indicators.**Discussion**This paper shows that market prices can be used to value human milk and breastfeeding within internationally accepted SNA conceptual framework for measuring GDP. Using breastfeeding rates as an indicator of child well-being is also compatible with the wellbeing framework being developed in New Zealand.**Keywords**Health, well-being, women, children, breastfeeding, breastmilk, GDP, human capital, greenhouse gas emissions, economic progress |