

DETAILS

RELATIONS



Basic & Clinical Pharmacology &
Toxicology

Volume 114, Issue 2

Feb 2014

Pages 151-221

ARTICLE

Alcohol and Breastfeeding

[View article page](#)

Maija Bruun Haastrup, Anton Pottegård, Per Damkier

CITE

Check for updates

© 2013 Nordic Pharmacological Society. Published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd

<https://doi.org/10.1111/bcpt.12149>

ISSN 1742-7835

eISSN 1742-7843

Online 4 January 2014

Accepted 17 September 2013

Received 19 July 2013

Pages 168 - 173

<<



BCPT
Basic & Clinical Pharmacology & Toxicology

Basic & Clinical Pharmacology & Toxicology, 2014, **114**, 168–173

Doi: 10.1111/bcpt.12149

MiniReview

Alcohol and Breastfeeding

Maija Bruun Haastrup¹, Anton Pottegård^{1,2} and Per Damkier^{1,2}

¹Department of Clinical Chemistry & Pharmacology, Odense University Hospital, Odense, Denmark and ²Clinical Pharmacology, Institute of Public Health, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark

(Received 19 July 2013; Accepted 17 September 2013)

Abstract: While the harmful effects of alcohol during pregnancy are well-established, the consequences of alcohol intake during lactation have been far less examined. We reviewed available data on the prevalence of alcohol intake during lactation, the influence of alcohol on breastfeeding, the pharmacokinetics of alcohol in lactating women and nursing infants and the effects of alcohol intake on nursing infants. A systematic search was performed in PubMed from origin to May 2013, and 41 publications were included in the review. Approximately half of all lactating women in Western countries consume alcohol while breastfeeding. Alcohol intake inhibits the milk ejection reflex, causing a temporary decrease in milk yield. The alcohol concentrations in breast milk closely resemble those in maternal blood. The amount of alcohol presented to nursing infants through breast milk is approximately 5–6% of the weight-adjusted maternal dose, and even in a theoretical case of binge drinking, the children would not be subjected to clinically relevant amounts of alcohol. Newborns metabolize alcohol at approximately half the rate of adults. Minute behavioural changes in infants exposed to alcohol-containing milk have been reported, but the literature is contradictory. Any long-term consequences for the children of alcohol-abusing mothers are yet unknown, but occasional drinking while breastfeeding has not been convincingly shown to adversely affect nursing infants. In conclusion, special recommendations aimed at lactating women are not warranted. Instead, lactating women should simply follow standard recommendations on alcohol consumption.

The harmful effects of alcohol during pregnancy are well documented [1] and have led to very restrictive recommendations for pregnant women concerning alcohol intake [2,3]. However, the effects of alcohol during breastfeeding have not been nearly as extensively examined, and the literature on the prevalence of alcohol consumption during breastfeeding is scarce. Previously, it was a common belief that alcohol was beneficial during breastfeeding, and many women were encouraged to

that breastfeeding women delay nursing their children until any ingested alcohol is completely eliminated from the milk or plan ahead by pumping out and storing milk before drinking [10], and a nomogram has been developed in an effort to help the women calculate the length of this delay [12].

The aim of this minireview was to summarize original data on the prevalence of alcohol intake during lactation, the influence of alcohol on breastfeeding, the pharmacokinetics of

?