

Shah, Tawali (2018). [The Effects of the NBO on breastfeeding mothers with high levels of perinatal maternal anxiety](#). Presented at the International Conference “Celebrating Berry Brazelton and the Work he Inspires”, Meyer Children’s Hospital, Florence, May 2018

Objectives: Can the Neonatal Behavioral Observation (NBO) ameliorate maternal perinatal anxiety symptoms, and improve breastfeeding?

Methods: Subjects consisted of 105 pregnant (37-42 weeks’ gestation) women, diagnosed with anxiety according to the score of the 14-item Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAMA) >14. They were divided into two groups: NBO intervention group (n=65) received the weekly NBO interventions (on six occasions from day 3 to day 42 postpartum). The control group consisted of 40 mothers, also diagnosed with high levels of anxiety. Maternal blood samples were collected for measurement of plasma prolactin and cortisol before delivery, 3, 15 and 42 days postpartum, respectively. The beginning time of milk secretion, frequency of breastfeeding and breastfeeding rate were also recorded.

Results: The NBO was associated with significant improvement in frequency of breastfeeding from 3 to 42 days postpartum, a reduction in maternal perinatal anxiety symptoms, decrease in plasma PRL and reduction in cortisol levels.

Conclusions: This research suggests that the NBO could be an effective, easily implemented tool in ameliorating maternal perinatal anxious symptoms, increasing plasma PRL levels, reducing excessive cortisol of anxious perinatal women, and thus improving exclusive breastfeeding rates.