

SOCIAL VALUE OF MAINTAINING BABY-FRIENDLY HOSPITAL INITIATIVE ACCREDITATION IN AUSTRALIA: CASE STUDY

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BACKGROUND

Breastfeeding has positive impacts on the health, environment, and economic wealth of families and countries.

WHO launched the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) in 1991 as a global program to incentivize maternity services to encourage breastfeeding by implementing the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding (Ten Steps).

These were developed to enable maternity services to support mothers and families to successfully initiate breastfeeding and to continue breastfeeding through referral to community support.

In 2020 only 26% of Australian hospitals were BFHI-accredited.

AIM

This study aimed to examine the social value of maintaining the BFHI accreditation in one public maternity unit in Australia using the Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in the maternity unit of Calvary Public Hospital, Canberra, an Australian BFHI-accredited public hospital.

Analysis was informed by the Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework; mapping the stakeholders, identifying and valuing outcomes, establishing impact, calculating the ratio and conducting sensitivity analysis.

To collect data on costs (financial, time and other resources required) of each of the Ten Steps, we interviewed the hospital's Director of Maternity Services and the Clinical Midwifery Educator, guided by a structured questionnaire.

This information was supplemented with costing studies from the literature that measure the benefits of the BFHI.

RESULTS

The social return from the BFHI in this facility was calculated to be **AU\$ 1,375,050**.

The total investment required was **AU\$ 24,433** per year.

Therefore, the SROI ratio was approximately **AU\$ 55:1** (sensitivity analysis: AU\$16–112).



EVERY AU\$ 1 INVESTED IN MAINTAINING BFHI ACCREDITATION BY THIS MATERNAL AND NEWBORN CARE FACILITY GENERATED APPROXIMATELY AU\$ 55 OF BENEFIT.

CONCLUSION

Maintaining BFHI accreditation at Calvary public hospital produced social value greater than the cost of investment, providing new evidence of its effectiveness and economic gains as a public health intervention.

Scaled up nationally, the BFHI would provide important benefits to the Australian health system and national economy.

Investment in BHFH accreditation is an investment in the health and wellbeing of families, communities and the Australian economy, as well as in health equity.

SCAN ME



Full article:

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