

JORDAN

Total Country Population (2000) 5.03 million

Project Catchment Population 1.0 million

Project Catchment Area All (351) government MCH centers located throughout the country

Country Profile

Contraceptive Use: At current fertility levels, Jordanian women will have an average of 3.6 children, compared with 5.6 children in 1990. Contraceptive prevalence of modern contraceptive methods increased from 27 percent in 1990 to 38.7 percent in 1998. In 1999, contraceptive prevalence of all methods—modern and traditional—was 57 percent. There continues, however, to be a gap between wanted and actual fertility.

Breastfeeding Practices: Ninety-five percent of Jordanian mothers initiate breastfeeding, but most do not practice optimal breastfeeding. In 1997, only 11 percent of infants less than six months were exclusively breastfed compared with 24.5 percent in 1990. In a national survey¹ conducted in 1997, two percent of married women interviewed said that they used prolonged breastfeeding to delay the next pregnancy. The breastfeeding practices of most Jordanian women, however, do not ensure protection against pregnancy.

Assessment and Program Design

The lactational amenorrhea method (LAM), which is based on the natural infertility resulting from certain patterns of breastfeeding, is a culturally acceptable method of family planning in Jordan. LAM supports both optimal infant feeding and child spacing. In 1995 the Ministry of Health (MOH) and USAID requested assistance from the Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH) in designing a project to address the need for improved breastfeeding practices and an increase in family planning prevalence. In June 1997 the USAID Mission asked LINKAGES to review the 16-month pilot Lactational Amenorrhea Method project and to develop a strategy for completing the process of integrating LAM into Jordan's reproductive health care services.

¹ 1997 Jordan Population and Family Health Survey



The outcome was the design of the MOH/ LINKAGES LAM Project.

The key objective of the program is to increase quality offering and acceptance of LAM as a transition to the use of other modern contraceptive methods. To do so, the program is implementing five strategies:

1. Strengthening the capacity of primary health care staff to integrate LAM, breastfeeding counseling, and lactation management into the MOH service delivery system;
2. Meeting informational needs of mothers and families by developing educational materials and media messages;
3. Increasing awareness of senior health officials, health professionals, and other stakeholders of LAM's impact on breastfeeding practices, infant health, and child spacing;
4. Strengthening management information systems to capture new LAM users; and
5. Ensuring sustainability of the breastfeeding and LAM intervention through the establishment of a National MCH Breastfeeding/LAM Resource and Training Center within the MCH Directorate.

Partners

Jordanian women seek antenatal, postpartum, and family planning services from a variety of providers. LINKAGES works primarily with MOH providers.

- **Ministry of Health.** LINKAGES and the MOH are expanding the work IRH initiated in 45 MOH maternal child health (MCH) centers to all 351 centers in the country. The MOH delivers family planning services through its network of MCH centers rather than facilities dedicated solely to family planning. Twenty-two percent of women receive antenatal care through this network of centers. The antenatal period is an opportune time to begin counseling women about breastfeeding, LAM, and other family planning methods. Another opportunity presents itself during postpartum and well-baby (immunization) visits. Approximately 28.2 percent of women who attend antenatal care at MCH centers return for postpartum services.² Among contraceptive users, 22.8 percent obtain their family planning method at one of the government's health and MCH centers.³
- **Other service providers.** LINKAGES is also collaborating with UNICEF and other USAID projects working in reproductive health. Examples of this collaboration include technical assistance for training, development of materials and mass media spots, and reporting of breastfeeding and LAM indicators in management information systems.

Capacity Building

Effective integration of LAM into Jordan's MCH/family planning service delivery system requires inclusion of LAM in pre-service curriculum and nationwide in-service training. LINKAGES has introduced LAM into pre-service education for nurses at the University of Jordan and is working with the university's School of Medicine to integrate breastfeeding and LAM into the curriculum.

The intended output of the in-service training is the effective and continuing application of new technical knowledge and counseling skills in breastfeeding and LAM, resulting in improved performance of service providers and routine offering of LAM as a family planning option. To support this objective, LINKAGES has provided

technical assistance for a training needs assessment, course design, curriculum development, and the training of trainers.

Training needs assessment. In 1999 the MOH and LINKAGES undertook a training needs assessment study. Of the 41 health care providers interviewed, almost all identified the need for training on lactation management. Only 30 percent knew all three of the LAM criteria. Many were confused about the definition of exclusive breastfeeding. Approximately 85 percent expressed a need for training on counseling techniques and interpersonal communication skills.

Course design and curriculum development. The information collected during the assessment was used to design a 12-day competency-based course for trainers. The first six days of the course cover technical information on lactation management and LAM, utilizing different teaching methodologies, with special emphasis on case studies and role plays. The second half of the course is a practicum that involves individual counseling, problem solving, critical thinking, and experience sharing. The practicum takes place at MCH centers and a hospital. The curriculum draws upon one developed by Wellstart International and used by the Egyptian National Training and Technical Support Center for Breastfeeding, as well as a 1 ½-day prototype LAM training module developed by LINKAGES.

Training of trainers (TOT). Since January 2000 two TOTs on lactation management and LAM have been conducted, with a third planned for October 2002. A five-day refresher training was held in 2001 for the trainers (25 nurse/midwives and doctors).

Training of providers. In September 2000, the MOH trainers began five-day training courses for service providers working at MCH centers in the different governorates. The plan is to train two health professionals from each of the centers. Six hundred providers had been trained by July 2002. Materials available to the trainers include a breastfeeding manual and LAM training module, both in Arabic, as well as a training kit with instructional materials and audiovisuals.

Mother-to-mother support training. In June 2002 LINKAGES and the MOH facilitated a training for 24 MOH trainers in the methodology for breastfeeding mother-to-mother support groups. Support groups for breastfeeding is a new concept in Jordan and will be introduced at some of the MCH centers as part of their outreach activities.

² Jordan Annual MCH Report, 2001

³ Jordan Annual Fertility Survey, 2001

Behavior Change Communications (BCC)

During the training needs assessment, health care providers identified the need for materials to assist them in communicating messages about breastfeeding and LAM. To design appropriate materials and messages, LINKAGES undertook a qualitative research study. Reasons given by the women participating in the study for LAM use included: no side effects, little expense, availability, no need for doctor follow-up, no menses, and mother/baby bonding. LAM users said that midwives, grandmothers, and other family members were their primary sources of information on LAM.

Results of the qualitative research have contributed to the development of training materials, an 11-page flip chart, a client brochure on LAM for distribution at MCH centers, two television spots, two radio spots, and billboard messages. The MOH and LINKAGES' media activities are designed to correct public confusion between breastfeeding and LAM, raise understanding of changes needed to practice LAM successfully, and contribute to the demand for LAM services.

Policy and Advocacy

Policy and advocacy activities are key components of the LINKAGES program. One form of advocacy is dialogue with key stakeholders. Activities include:

- ♦ Discussions with the directors of health to garner their support for breastfeeding and LAM training and follow-up;
- ♦ Sessions with religious leaders from each of the 12 governorates to share information on the contribution of breastfeeding to infant health and development; and
- ♦ Advocacy meetings for pediatricians and obstetricians on adopting the principles of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative in public hospitals.

Each year the Ministry of Health, LINKAGES, and UNICEF coordinate advocacy events during World Breastfeeding Week to stimulate more active and informed support for LAM and breastfeeding. At a half-day seminar, they provide technical updates for health officials, policy makers, and MCH supervisors on the theme of World Breastfeeding Week. During the week, MCH and primary health care centers hold special health education sessions on breastfeeding, and health professionals promote breastfeeding on radio and television talk shows.

Depiction of LAM Criteria in Flip Chart



No return of menses



Baby less than six months



Exclusive Breastfeeding day and night*

*Jordan uses "exclusive breastfeeding" as one of the LAM criteria rather than "full or nearly full breastfeeding." Some countries choose to modify the international criteria slightly to reflect national policies. The Ministry of Health recommends exclusive breastfeeding (no water, fluids, or other foods) for the first six months because exclusive breastfeeding provides the maximum nutritional and health benefits for the infant.

Monitoring and Evaluation

LINKAGES' M&E strategy in Jordan involves:

- Regular collection of data (both service statistics and community survey data) at MCH centers established as sentinel sites;
- Capacity building of the MOH/MCH to collect and interpret breastfeeding and LAM data so that M&E can be included as a competency area of the National MCH Breastfeeding/LAM Resource and Training Center;
- Follow-up and supportive supervision of those trained through the project; and
- Advocacy for inclusion of exclusive breastfeeding and LAM use rates in the national health information system.

When a proposal was put forth to delete some of the breastfeeding-related questions in the 2002 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), LINKAGES and Macro International met with officials from the Department of Statistics in Jordan and the USAID Mission to advocate for their inclusion. Thanks to these efforts, the questions were kept in the survey. As a result, LINKAGES will be able to measure change in the exclusive breastfeeding rate of infants 0- < 6

months and compare it with the 1997 rate. LINKAGES also successfully advocated for the inclusion of LAM (and not prolonged breastfeeding) as a method of family planning in the 2002 DHS.

In the initial stage of program implementation, LINKAGES advocated for the inclusion of LAM in the national registry of modern family planning methods. Now LAM use data are collected monthly along with all other modern methods. These data from the MOH/MCH clinics illustrate the impact of the program on LAM use. In 1999, a total of 45 women reported using LAM for child spacing. By 2000, the number had increased to 246, and by 2001 the total number of women reporting LAM use for child spacing had increased to 2,211.

The LAM User Rate measures the proportion of all women of reproductive age who report using LAM as a means of child spacing. While this rate underestimates LAM use among only those eligible women with infants less than six months, it serves as a proxy for LAM use when the infant's age is not available. The LAM User Rate among women who receive services at the government's health centers increased dramatically over time, from .1 percent in 1999, to .5 percent in 2000, and to 4.5 percent in 2001.

LINKAGES is a USAID-funded global program providing technical assistance to organizations promoting breastfeeding. LINKAGES supports comprehensive country activities to improve exclusive breastfeeding rates and related complementary feeding and maternal dietary practices and to extend the offering of the Lactational Amenorrhea Method as an effective, modern method of contraception. The map below shows where LINKAGES is involved in long-term programming, applied research studies, and short-term technical assistance.

For more information on the Jordan country program and other LINKAGES' activities, contact:

LINKAGES Headquarters

E-mail: LINKAGES@aed.org

Fax: (202) 884-8977

Phone: (202) 884-8221

Website: www.linkagesproject.org

Country Office

E-mail: Linkages@index.com.jo

Fax: 962-6-552-0921

Phone: 962-6-552-0921



WORLD LINKAGES is a publication of LINKAGES: Breastfeeding, LAM, and Related Complementary Feeding and Maternal Nutrition Program. LINKAGES is supported by G/PHN/HN, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of Grant No. HRN-A-00-97-00007-00 and is managed by the Academy for Educational Development. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID.

