



No Formula for Success: Building a Breastfeeding Culture in a Quaternary Care Facility

Heike Nicks, BSN, RNC - hmnicks@sentara.com

Sherry MacDonald, BSN, RN, IBCLC - samacdon@sentara.com



Introduction

High-risk maternity centers have barriers to meeting exclusive breastfeeding goals due to maternal and newborn complications and acuity. Breastfeeding infants are commonly supplemented with formula when medically indicated.

In Virginia, the average hospital breastfeeding initiation rate is 79%. Alarminglly, at three months postpartum, only 39.5% of Virginia mothers continued to breastfeed exclusively (CDC, 2013). Healthy People 2020, a national initiative for the promotion of health and prevention of disease, believes a breastfeeding target goal of 81.9%, with 46.2% of infants exclusively breastfed, can be accomplished by reducing formula supplementation for newborns within the first two days of life (HealthyPeople.gov, 2014).

Background

The Sentara Healthcare system identified Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation as a goal for all hospitals providing maternity services. Overall, breastfeeding rates at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital (SNGH) have improved. The nursing staff continues to develop a culture which encourages exclusive breastfeeding. Roughly 60% of babies delivered at this quaternary care facility are eligible for exclusive breastfeeding without medical indication for supplementation. The goal of SNGH Women's Health staff is to use evidence-based education and interventions to increase exclusive breastfeeding rates in healthy newborns by reducing the supplementation of infants with formula when not medically indicated. The team implemented 10 Steps for Successful Breastfeeding guidelines to determine interventions consistent with Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation through the Virginia Department of Health (VDH, 2015).

Methods

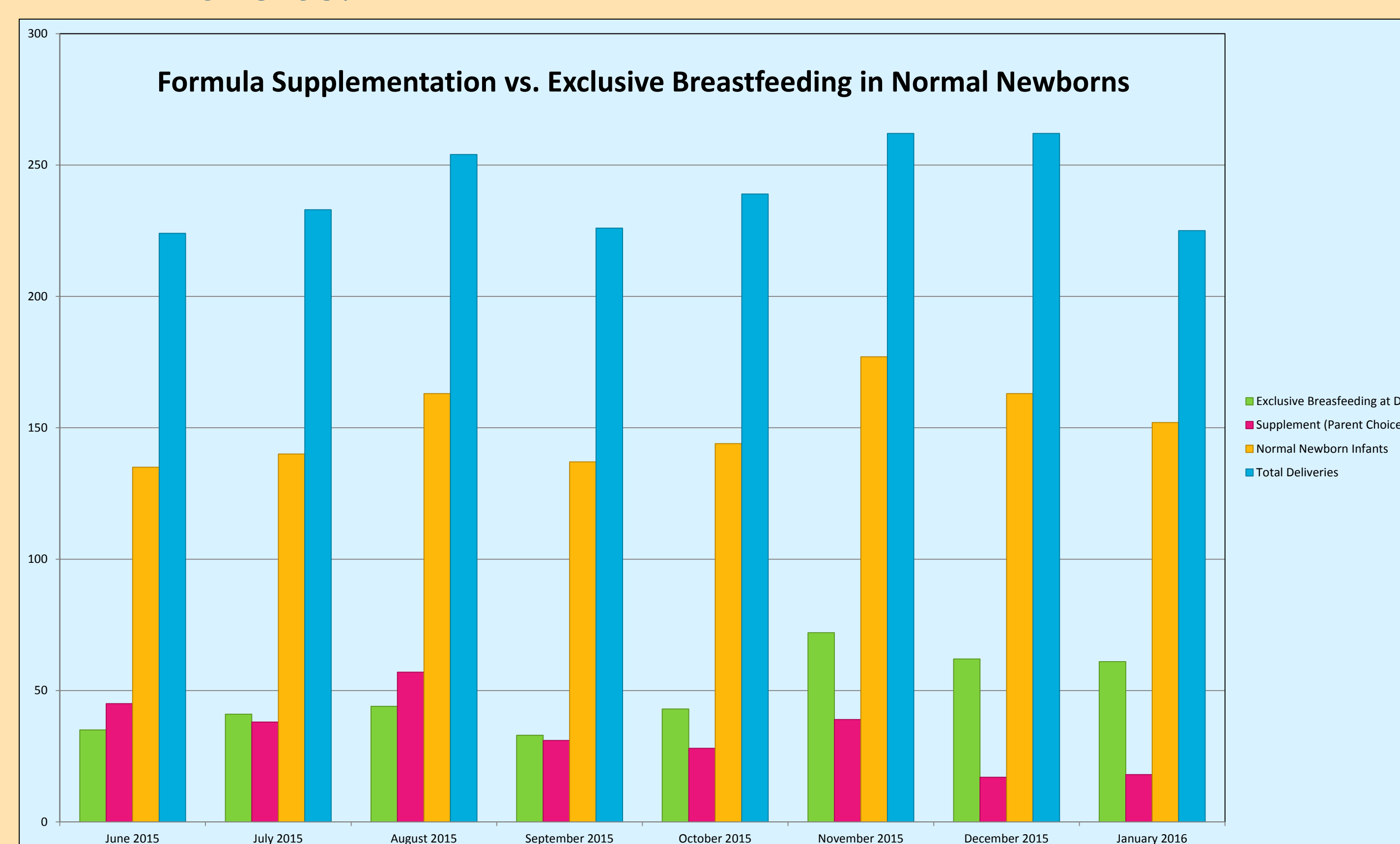
In June 2015 the Women's Health team at SNGH designed a performance improvement project to increase exclusive breastfeeding rates in normal newborns. The team compiled descriptive statistics on breastfeeding rates both prior to and after education interventions:

- **An interprofessional team was established to increase communication of breastfeeding project goals and provide breastfeeding education. The team was comprised of:**
 - **Registered Nurses**
 - **Lactation Consultants**
 - **Nurse Managers**
 - **Neonatologists**
 - **Pediatric Residents**

- The team filmed a staff education video to promote the standardization of family breastfeeding education. The film is used in conjunction with the facility's *Guide to Successful Breastfeeding* booklet.
- The postpartum staff received computer based education highlighting the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.
- All departments of the Women's Health team participated in discussions centered on the new staff breastfeeding video, key breastfeeding teaching points, tools, and strategies to encourage exclusive breastfeeding.
- The electronic medical record (EMR) received modifications to improve ease of exclusive breastfeeding documentation.

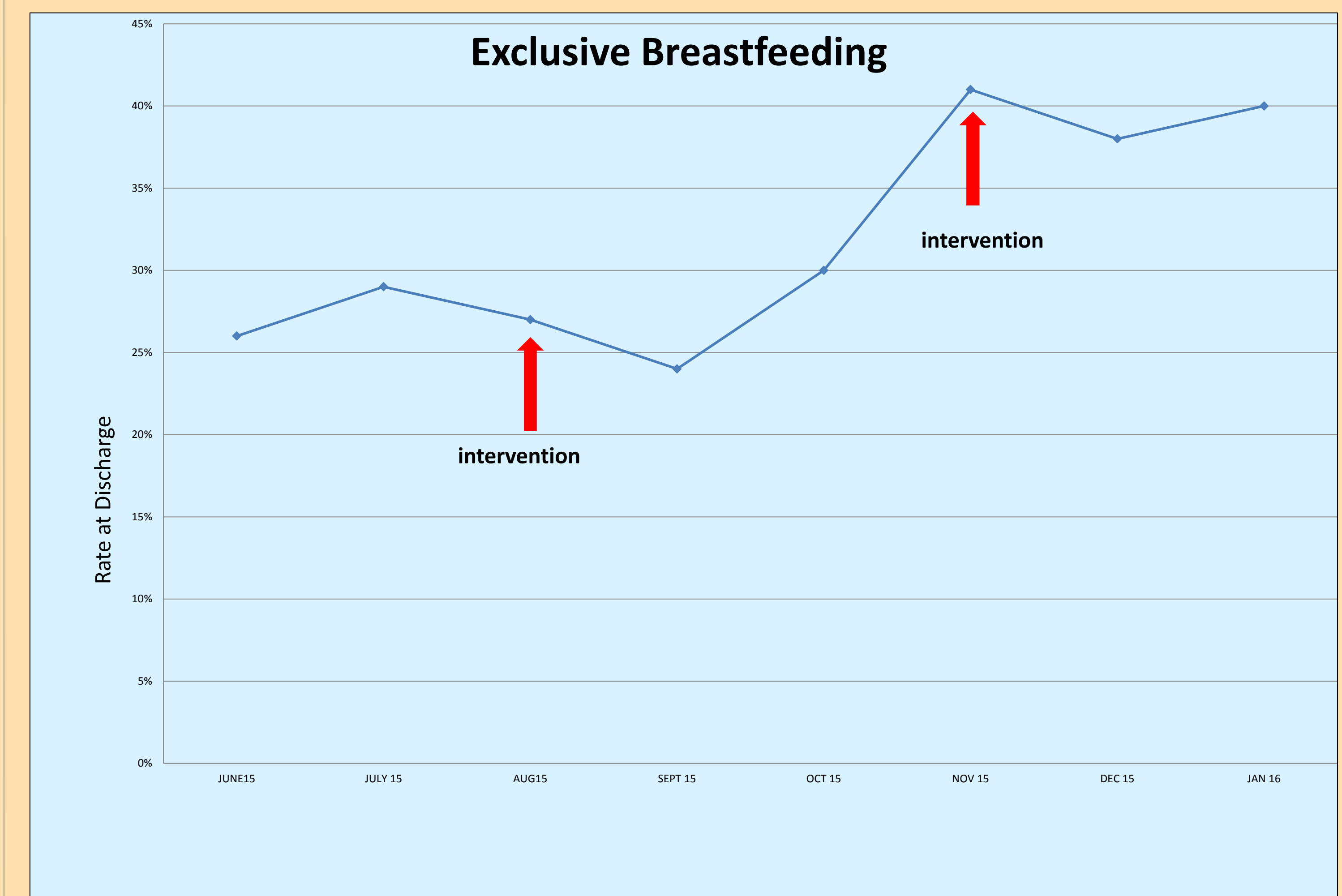
Findings

- The initial educational intervention to only the postpartum staff did not result in significant increases in exclusive breastfeeding rates.
- Following expanded in-services targeting the entire Women's Health team, the exclusive breastfeeding rates in healthy newborns reflected immediate increase.
- Formula supplementation rates for non-medical indications began to decrease after the first education intervention and continue to decline.
- Audits of the EMR confirm improvement of both documentation of exclusive breastfeeding and the influence of patient education on parental feeding choice.



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Conclusion and Implications

Based on the identified 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, the next focus will be:

- **Encourage early breastfeeding.**
- **Update existing breastfeeding policies.**
- **Develop modifications to the EMR designed to support required documentation elements for Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation.**
- **Promote immediate postpartum skin to skin contact between newborns and mothers.**
- **Initiate "Ban the Bag" to eliminate hospital distribution of formula company bags at discharge to decrease perceived hospital endorsement of formula feeding. This intervention will increase maternal confidence in her ability to breastfeed and increase exclusive breastfeeding rates.**
- **Continue interprofessional collaboration for education and communication of all Women's Health initiatives.**

References

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