Infant and young child feeding in emergencies in the media

Source: Sydney Morning Herald, Timor Leste
Who provides infant formula and powdered milk?

What messages do the media give on infant and young child feeding in emergencies?
Infant formula and powdered milk
Who provides it?

Marrium with her 13-day old child outside her ruined home in Bagerhat district.
Source: Irin News. Cyclone Sidr, Bangladesh
The French Navy donated more than two tons of food to the earthquake relief efforts.
Source: Defenselink, USA. Pakistan Earthquake, 2005
Indonesian leader orders search of 205 missing in Aceh flood

The government sends five tons of food supplies, including baby formula, biscuits and milk.

Combined force delivers emergency aid to refugees

KABUL: Afghan and coalition soldiers deliver aid …ANA soldiers brought baby formula and feeders. … “Young mothers, who arrived with infants, got a special package of baby items, including infant formula, vitamins, and nutritional supplements.”

Disaster victims yet to receive goods

The state emergency controller said … I want to know the number of infants, adults and children so that the right amount of food supplies are sent…we want to know who are to receive them so we won’t just send just rice but milk as well because we know there are babies.”

Pakistan sends relief goods to Bangladesh

Pakistan government on the directions of the President has sent the relief assistance... The aircraft are carrying... four tons of baby food and three tons medicine. The aircraft... was received by senior Civil and Military authorities of Bangladesh.

Source: Pakistan Times. Cyclone Sidr, Bangladesh, 2007
In 2004, through PMI, Nestlé Indonesia provided help in the form of Nestlé products to the earthquake victims in eastern part of Indonesia.
Source: Nestle
Maliban donates infant milk food for tsunami victims

Maliban in collaboration with the government of Sri Lanka has once again provided assistance to the children of tsunami survivors, by making a contribution of infant milk powder to the value of Rs. 20 million. The donation was handed over… at the President’s House.

Tsunami Relief Donation Includes Georgia Product

Gordonsville, Va. - As a result of a generous corporate donation, a large amount of formula... will be heading to victims of the tsunami... Bright Beginnings contribution will be flown from Los Angeles to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia... Emergency airlifts of this nature have been the signature activity of Operation USA for over 25 years.

Source: Saint Albans Messenger. Indian Ocean Tsunami 2005/06.
Donations pour in for quake victims
Milk products to ease the burden of those affected by the disaster were donated by Dumex Malaysia. A manager with Dumex, said the contributions were in line with the company’s social responsibility and also to ease the pain and suffering of the earthquake victims, many of whom were children.
Source: New Strait Times, Malaysia.
Bengkel Amal Relief Efforts
“We left after we gave milk and baby food to the locals.”
East Timor Update

Yasona, NCCA CWS' partner in East Timor has already distributed emergency supplies in various camps in Dili since the early days of unrest in the country. Displaced East Timorese families...have received...three boxes of milk/baby.

Singapore volunteers continue to help flood victims in Malaysia
Mercy Relief distributed … 2,000 ringgit worth of milk powder …Meanwhile, the team from the Singapore Red Cross have returned home. They are now packing more baby food and diapers to deliver to Malaysia in the next two days.
Source: Channel NewsAsia. Malaysian flood, 2006
“We distributed children's clothes and about 40 mothers showed up with their babies, we…taught them how to use the milk powder we had received in big quantities.”
“A delegation has begun teaching mothers how to properly use infant formula to feed their children. As a result of the Tsunami many women were traumatised and no longer able to properly breastfeed. Over 60 mothers brought their children aged ½ year to 3, to the camp. They wished to learn how to properly maintain hygiene while feeding their children with the infant formula provided by our feeding centre. Word has spread, and every day new parents arrive.”

Service and religious organisations

A generous donation from the Rotary Club of Bergen-Alkmaar, The Netherlands …allowed the club to meet an identified need to assist orphan infants up to one-year-old, as well as mothers who are unable to breast feed, by the provision of a considerable amount of infant formula through five registered clinics in Dili and environs.

Source: Rotary Downunder. Timor Leste 2003
Catholic Church distributes aid to quake victims

Catholics are distributing relief material …Father Antonius Benny Susetyo…told UCA News that the center has dispatched 13 trucks filled with canvas for tents, clothes, instant noodles, medicine and milk to relief centers in the earthquake-affected areas.

“She…gets details of the number of families at each camp so she can supply…milk formula to babies. ‘At the moment some babies are being given the wrong formula and the mothers don’t know how to use it. It’s a little bit disorganised’”

Tsunami Victims Relief in Sri Lanka
Please donate urgently for the one million+ Tsunami victims who have lost everything and need your help immediately to survive. Critically urgent supplies eg. Infant formula and feeding bottles and medical supplies will be airlifted…The remainder will be shipped in 40 foot container and arrive in Sri Lanka in approximately 21 days.
Our flood relief centre needs some manpower to help in the packing of things to be sent to Johor. We are doing OK on supplies but if you do still want to send things, these are the useful items:…Baby Packs-feeding bottles - bottle teats- baby napkins- baby soap- milk powder for babies.

Baby/hygiene kits

Indonesia: Jakarta Floods Information

In response to the flooding, the Indonesian Red Cross … has distributed over 16,000 hygiene kits, 4,300 baby kits.

Source: ReliefWeb. Jakarta Floods, Indonesia, 2007
Media reports can highlight problems and provide opportunity for intervention

Media reports also contribute to the problem

Media reports can be part of the solution
Media influences in infant feeding in emergencies

Ministry of Health Sri Lanka

Although Sri Lanka is a country with a high exclusive breastfeeding rate, there was a myth among mothers about the inability to produce enough breast milk when under stress. A major problem was the distribution of infant formula and feeding bottles by donors and NGOs without the appropriate controls to breastfeeding mothers. Donors acted emotionally without any scientific basis, disregarding the dangers of artificial feeding in disasters. Additionally the mass media was very keen on feeding babies so made a public appeal to supply artificial milk and feeding bottles. There was also some difficulty in getting appropriate complementary food to mothers post tsunami. The ministry of health faced many challenges to ensure that breastfeeding mothers continued to do so and did not swap to unsustainable and potentially dangerous infant formula. http://whiteribbonalliance.com/documents/FinalWRABaliReport.pdf
Wrong messages in the media

- Infant formula saves babies
- Infant formula donations are needed
- Breastfeeding is fragile and unreliable
Infant formula saves babies

Cyclone Sidr, Bangladesh
© Sirajul Hossain www.sirajul.com
Infant formula saves babies

Outbreaks of illness reported among Cilacap tsunami survivors

About 600 mothers are having trouble breast-feeding their infants due to the stress of the tsunami and living in the camps. "We're lucky that we immediately received milk formula among the relief aid although the quantity is not much. Those children have to be satisfied with formula since their mothers' breast milk suddenly dried up,“

X Infant formula is needed

Source: Real Medicine. Indian Ocean Tsunami, Sri Lanka 2004/5
Infant formula is needed

How you can help: Support an expectant mother

The Mother and Child Package will provide support for expectant mothers and their new-borns. Mothers and infants will receive medical care and other pre- and post-natal essentials, which include supplements, delivery costs, baby clothes and diapers, baby formula and immunisations.

In Search of Milk

As The Daily Star correspondent was taking photos, he was startled by a grumbling yet desperate voice. "What will photos do? Don't take photos... it won't solve our problems... it won't feed my child." … Monera… and her child Remon have been passing some of their days half-fed and on some days nothing at all. She cannot breastfeed Remon as she herself has not had enough food recently. Monera is not alone. There are many like her who are desperate for milk or baby food. Returning from the embankment, The Daily Star correspondent asked Deputy Commissioner … about the issue. He said he was aware of the problem and he had already sought milk and baby food from higher authorities for distribution among the destitute.

"We need milk for babies, nappies, drugs"

Infant formula is needed

Source: Sydney Morning Herald, Australia. Indian Ocean Tsunami, Aceh, 2004/5

One volunteer, Robert, estimates there are about 500 young children at the camp. “What we really need here very urgently is baby food,” he said. “The little babies have nothing to eat and we need more tents because so many people come every day and there is nowhere to sleep.”

Indonesia: Mt. Merapi Volcano OCHA Situation Report No. 7
PMI noted that some of the required assistance includes blankets, hygiene kits and baby milk.
Source: ReliefWeb. Yogyakarta earthquake, Indonesia, 2006
Infant formula is needed

Typhoon survivors facing threat of disease
Sixteen-year-old mother Jennifer Pamplona struggles to breastfeed her two-week-old baby… "She is not eating. She has been crying and has been feverish" … "Water is a huge problem, the toilets are filled to capacity and we don’t have portable ones. There are so many children that are sickly now, and we can’t continue to live like this… We are desperate for medicines and infant formula."
Breastfeeding is fragile and unreliable

Wave of sorrow and joy: twins ripped from mum's arms but one survives

WHEN the terrifying tsunami came pounding ... Kamisem clung on to her three-week-old twins as tightly as she could. But the sheer force of the killer wave ripped her babies out of her arms and into the water. Amazingly, her tiny son Rizki was found alive one hour later ... The young couple are overjoyed at their son's survival, while deeply distressed about their daughter's death ... Yesterday they were in the small, ill-equipped clinic ... trying to feed the listless little boy with bread dipped in milk formula. Kamisem's breast milk has dried up -- caused, she said, by the stress she has been under.

Breastfeeding is fragile and unreliable

Marooned People Cry for Drinking Water
Women and children are bearing the brunt of this crisis as many mothers cannot breastfeed their children. Syeda Begum, 20, one of over 12,000 people who took shelter on Ranigram embankment… said she could not breastfeed her three-month-old boy, as she had nothing to eat for a day.
Breastfeeding is fragile and unreliable. Breast milk substitutes should be included in the food aid package for families with infants as in disaster situations under stress and trauma mothers have lactating problems.
Good media coverage

Mother breastfeeds her 2 year old son in Aceh after the Tsunami
Source: Yahoo News. Indian Ocean Tsunami, Indonesia
Breastfeeding support

In times of disaster, when clean water can be scarce, breastfeeding protects infants from disease.
Breastfeeding Support

Unicef promoting breast-feeding among Java earthquake survivors

Hoping to prevent an increase in the infant mortality rate in Yogyakarta... Unicef is providing breast-feeding counseling to residents of the worst affected regions... Recent surveys have shown an increase in the use of breast milk substitutes in the worst quake affected regions... The increase in the use of substitutes was sparked by the large amounts of logistic aid provided by donors. "The surveys show that the use of breast milk substitutes in both regions has doubled among babies"... said Anna... "The rise (in the use of substitutes) has increased the prevalence of diarrhea by six times among infants... "... adding that there was an urgent need for a nationwide breast-feeding consulting program. She said that consulting had proved effective in increasing the number of mothers providing their babies exclusively with breast milk in their first six months of life. She added that a study had said that exclusive breast-feeding was the most effective mode of preventing high infant mortality rates.

Breastfeeding Support

Unicef Rekindles Hope In Andaman And Nicobar Islands
From teaching mothers to breastfeed their children to preparing a database of orphaned children, Unicef has brought new hope to the people of the remote Andaman and Nicobar Islands hit by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. The high waves had washed away her husband and her baby was born prematurely. The traumatized mother did not even know how to feed the baby until Unicef workers in the shelter taught her to breastfeed the infant.
Source: News Post India, India. Indian Ocean Tsunami, 2004/5
Highlighting risks of infant formula

Source: ACT News. Nias earthquake, Indonesia, 2005
Patients keep pouring into Indonesian hospitals despite receding flood waters

Waters in Indonesia's flood-hit capital have receded, but Dr. Kristiono is busier than ever. "I've never seen anything like it," he said, pointing to a row of babies on intravenous drips, many of them sick after their parents used tap water infected with E. coli bacteria in their formula. "They just keep coming in."

Twenty-one die from tetanus, 138 mentally ill in Yogyakarta

“[Health minister] Siti said a diarrheal disease outbreak was still a concern because babies were frequently being given instant formula milk by their mothers instead of being breast fed. This was because survivors had received a large amount of donated supplies of breast milk substitutes, she said.

Summary

Media reports are one indication of what is happening in regards to infant feeding in an emergency. Reports over the previous 4 years in every major emergency indicate widespread problems. Military, governments, aid agencies and individuals are involved. Very, very few positive reports in the media. Media reports perpetuate myths that contribute to poor practice. Media reports are part of the problem but they can be part of the solution… Next presentation will discuss this.