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Dads as breastfeeding advocates: results from a randomized controlled trial of an educational intervention.

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OBJECTIVE: Recognizing that an expectant father may influence a mother's decision to breast- or formula-feed, we tested the effectiveness of a simple, educational intervention that was designed to encourage fathers to advocate for breastfeeding and to assist his partner if she chooses to breastfeed. **STUDY DESIGN:** We conducted a randomized controlled trial in which expectant fathers (n = 59) were assigned randomly to attend either a 2-hour intervention class on infant care and breastfeeding promotion (intervention) or a class on infant care only (control group). The classes, which were led by a peer-educator, were interactive and informal and utilized different media to create an accessible environment for participants. Couples were recruited during the second trimester from a university obstetrics practice. **RESULTS:** Overall, breastfeeding was initiated by 74% of women whose partners attended the intervention class, as compared with 41% of women whose partners attended the control class (P = .02).

CONCLUSION: Expectant fathers can be influential advocates for breastfeeding, playing a critical role in encouraging a woman to breastfeed her newborn infant.

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