



Effective Health Care

Management of Infants with Ankyloglossia Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- The topic, *Management of Infants with Ankyloglossia*, will go forward for refinement as a systematic review. The scope of this topic, including populations, interventions, comparators, and outcomes, will be further developed in the refinement phase.
- When key questions have been drafted, they will be posted on the AHRQ Web site and open for public comment. To sign up for notification when this and other Effective Health Care (EHC) Program topics are posted for public comment, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list1/>.

Topic Description

Nominator(s): Organization

Nomination Summary: The nominator is interested in understanding the comparative effectiveness of various surgical therapies for ankyloglossia (e.g., frenotomy, frenulotomy, frenectomy) in order to improve breastfeeding among newborns and infants.

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Population(s): Breastfeeding infants 6 months old or younger with ankyloglossia

Intervention(s): Frenotomy, frenectomy, or frenulotomy

Comparator(s): Breastfeeding management without surgical intervention

Outcome(s): Successful exclusive breastfeeding

Key Questions from Nominator:

1. For patients with ankyloglossia and breastfeeding difficulties, what are the comparative risks and benefits of performing the frenotomy procedure to release the tongue?
2. Among clinicians who perform the frenotomy procedure (pediatricians, dentists, oral surgeons, or otolaryngologists), are there variations in outcome?

Considerations

- The topic meets all EHC Program selection criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- Ankyloglossia is a condition in which the tongue is limited in range of motion due to tight or short sublingual tissue. This congenital, oral anomaly is typically caused by an unusually short and thick lingual frenulum and can lead to restricted movement of the infant's tongue, resulting in difficulties with breastfeeding among newborns and infants.
- While many infants with ankyloglossia can breastfeed without difficulty, research has shown that duration of breastfeeding is shorter in these patients.
- Treatment for ankyloglossia is based on a surgical procedure, known as frenotomy, in which the lingual frenulum is separated from the floor of the mouth. However, there is variation in the management of patients with ankyloglossia. A comprehensive review of the various treatment options could help parents, caregivers, and providers make more informed treatment decisions.