

Breastfeeding May Save Your Child's Life

Joelle Johnson

Beloit College, Beloit, WI

Figure 1: Diabetes Complications

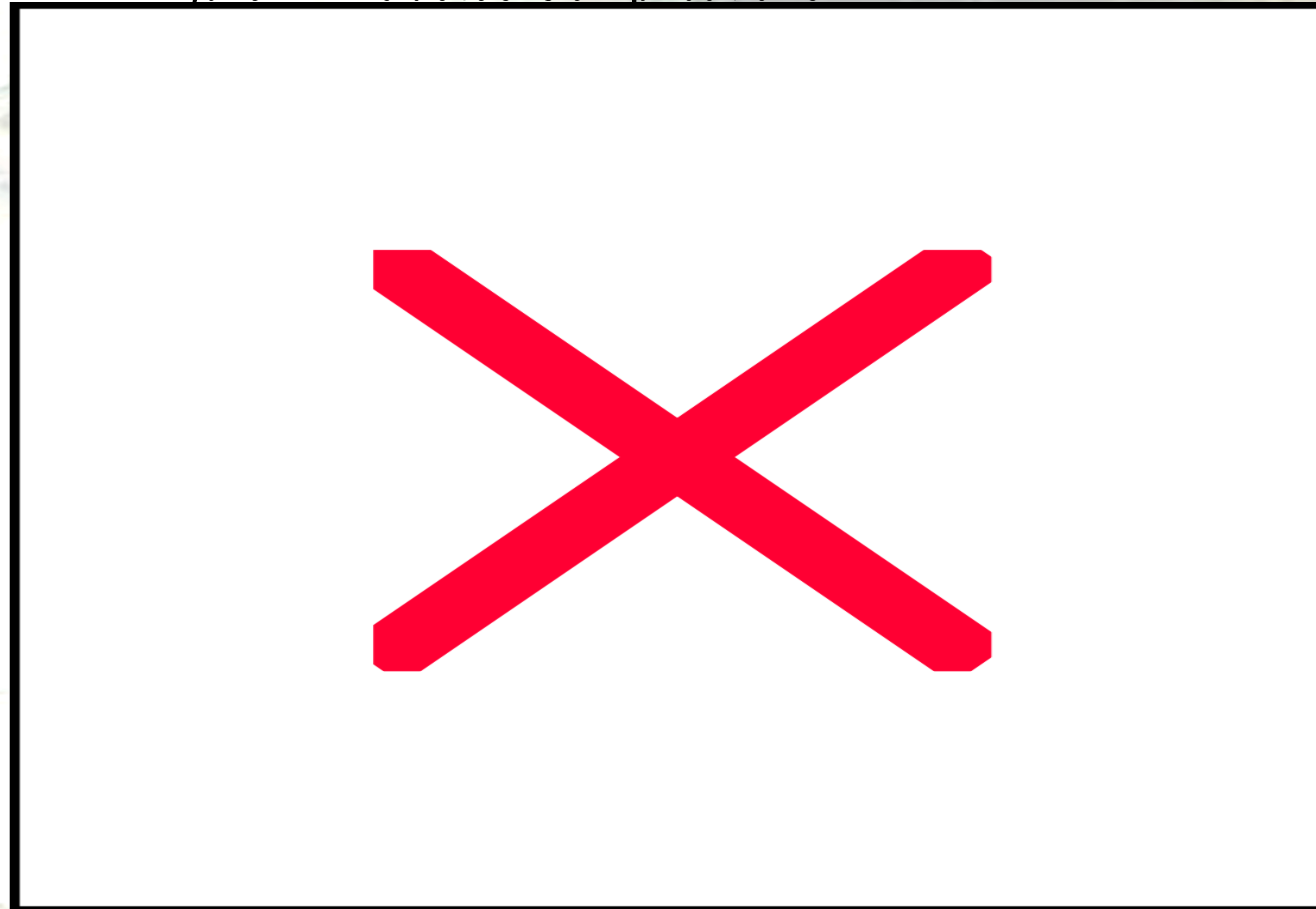
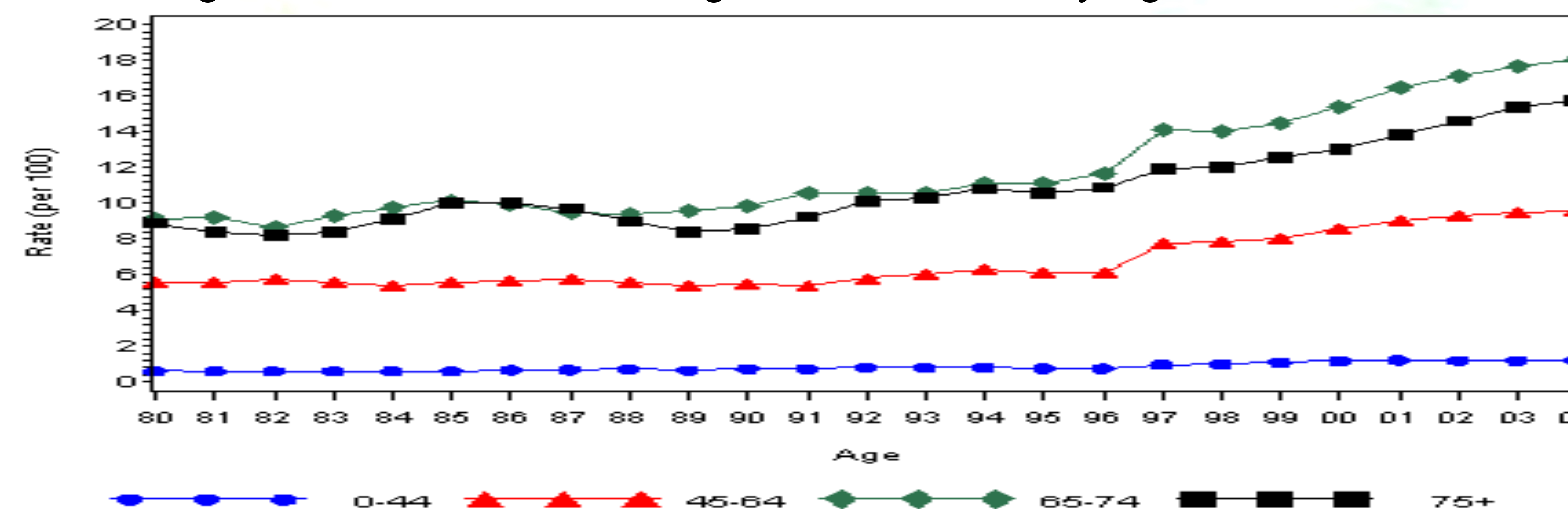


Figure 2: Prevalence of Diagnosed Diabetes by Age – U.S. 1980-2004



Results

Conclusive evidence shows that breast fed children have much lower rates of diabetes later in life. According to a study done by researchers at UC Davis (1), bottle fed infants with cow's milk-based formula has been linked to the development of diabetes later in life. They have linked bottle feeding to diabetes because bottle-fed children are often overfed, leading to obesity later in life. Laurie Barclay, MD conducted a study (2) in which she found that childhood obesity may be reduced by 40% when breastfeeding is practiced for over 3 months, significantly reducing children's risk for diabetes later in life.

Discussion

As can be seen in Fig.2, diabetes was most prevalent in people 45 and up. This figure is looking at both type 1 and type 2 diabetes, but it can be assumed that at this age and onset (non genetic) diabetes is surfacing in individuals (see Fig 2). According to my research, this type of diabetes is especially preventable by breastfeeding. When babies are bottle-fed, the parents are the ones who have control over how much and how often the babies eat. When parents do not exercise this type of control, it often leads to overweight infants and continues to happen throughout their childhood. Overfeeding results in overweight children making them extremely susceptible to diabetes, especially type 2 (2). Thus, developing healthy eating habits in children at a young age may prevent such avoidable disease as diabetes.

3) Campbell, Colin T., Campbell, Thomas M. The Study.

Dallas, Texas: BenBella Books Inc., 2006.

4) "National Diabetes Surveillance System". Centers for Disease Control's Diabetes Program: Nov. 2005.

[Online] Available

<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/statistics/>

Abstract

Early exposure to cow's milk can increase children's risk of developing diabetes later in life. Breastfeeding is a major preventive measure that parents can take to protect their children. Cow's milk-based formula can be hazardous to children when they are overfed, which sometimes occurs in bottle-fed children. Early feeding habits taught to children affect their eating habits and health for the rest of their lives.

Introduction

Diabetes is an incredibly debilitating disease (see Fig.1). It can occur as two different types. Type 1 diabetes, also known as juvenile diabetes, can be a life-long condition in which the pancreas ceases to produce energy. It is an autoimmune disorder with many likely genetic causes. Treatment includes daily injections of insulin, diet alterations, daily exercise, and blood sugar level tests multiple times each day. Type 2 diabetes occurs in 90-95% of diabetics. With type 2, also known as adult-onset diabetes, the body does not produce enough insulin or cells become insensitive to it. Type 2 diabetes is often triggered by being overweight. My research shows that breastfeeding may actually prevent and protect infants from developing either type of non-genetic diabetes later in life.

Method

I gathered my data by examining peer-reviewed journals and internet sources as well as incorporating information from the text, *The China Study*. I found the most recent sources possible in order to have the most accurate information.

References

1)Barker, Osmona C. "Breast-feeding, Cow's Milk, and Later Risk of Diabetes".

[Online] Available

<http://nutrition.ucdavis.edu/briefs/issues/JulAug00.htm>

2) Barclay, Laurie. "Breast-feeding may Reduce Risk for Obesity in Children of Women with Gestational Diabetes". Medscape medical news: April, 27 2006.

[Online] Available

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/530907>