



ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2007

9TH Management Committee

President –	Mdm Rebecca Chin (elected on 24 th March 2007)
Vice President & – Secretary, Acting	Mdm Alderline Wong (elected Vice-President on 24 th March 2007; Acting Secretary appointed on 3 rd March 2008)
Secretary –	Mdm Chng Bee Wee (elected on 24 th March 2007; resigned 16 th December 2007)
Treasurer –	Mdm Yap Soon Lan (elected on 24 th March 2007)
Counselling Coordinator –	Mdm Vanessa Lu (elected on 24 th March 2007)
Publications Editor -	Mdm Kee Peck Yin (appointed on 24 th March 2007)
Librarian –	Mdm Oniatta Effendi (elected on 24 th March 2007; resigned 20 th May 2007) Mdm Chaerani Meutia (appointed on 20 th May 2007)
Product Coordinator –	Haslinda Putri Harun (elected on 24 th March 2007; changed portfolio to Committee Member on 20 th May 2007; resigned on 5 th August 2007)
Acting Product Coordinator –	Mdm Rebecca Chin (appointed on 5 th August 2007)
Talks Coordinator –	Mdm Elaine Chan (appointed on 24 th March 2007)
Membership Coordinator –	Mdm Cheng Swee Chin (appointed on 24 th March 2007)
Committee Member -	Mdm Meutia Chaerani (elected on 24 th March 2007; changed portfolio to Librarian on 20 th May 2007) Mdm Haslinda Putri Harun (appointed on 20 th May 2007; resigned on 5 th August 2007)

Code of Governance for Charities and IPCs

According to the Code of Governance for Charities and IPCs, the committee has to do a Self-Evaluation checklist to see in which level of compliance the group is in.

The levels are:

1. Compliance
2. Compliance in Progress
3. Not Complied
4. Not Applicable

The committee will complete the self-evaluation checklist and update our findings on the group's state of compliance on the website.

Membership

Total number of members as at 2007 is slightly lower than Year 2006. However, 4 more members converted their membership to Life Membership and we have 3 new Life Members compared to none in 2006.

	2007	2006
Number who join as Associate members	28	50
Number who join as Full members	45	57
Total numbers who join in	73	107
Sign on as Life Members	3 Full Members	0
Convert to Life Members	6	2
Life members	154	141
Total members	182	188

The group organized a movie event on 2nd September 2007. All 240 seats were sold out for the family friendly movie "Ratatouille" at Suntec, Eng Wah Cinema. We received many good feedbacks on the event. Many also requested that BMSG organize more events for its members. We would like to thank the volunteers, participants and sponsors (Avent, MacPherson Community Club-Family Life Champion, Infantree Pte Ltd, Maternalove, New Maternity, NewWater and Pharmaplus) for making this event possible.

Counselling

A counsellors' gathering was held in June to enable the counsellors to be updated on current breastfeeding research, information and findings. 14 experienced counselors and 7 trainee-counselors attended the gathering. 2 training sessions were conducted in 2007.

Training Course 1:

Date: 21st April to 26th May 2007 (Sat)

Time: 9:30am – 12:30pm

Trainer: Mdm. Yap Tian Sew

Counseling Trainees:

1. Fa'izah Ahmad
2. Lilian Chiang
3. Louise Wong
4. Sharon R. Singh

Training Course 2:

Date: 12th May to 23rd June 2007 (Sat)

Time: 1– 4pm

Trainer: Mrs. Doris Fok

Counseling Trainees:

1. Ariel Lim
2. Daniel Lim
3. Elaine Chan
4. Hamidah Tuki
5. Meutia Chaerani
6. Nur Ain Istikharah
7. Violet Teo

BMSG also wishes to thank the following trainers for contributing their precious time and resources to help us :
1. Doris Fok 2. Sunitha Raman 3. Yeo Soo Lan 4. Yap Tian Sew

A Trainers' meeting was held in September to review the current syllabus. It was agreed that we will increase the number of training hours from 18 hours to 20 hours as per WHO's (World Health Organisation) training requirements.

Breastfeeding Mothers' Support Group (Singapore)

96 Waterloo Street, #02-04 SCWO Centre, Singapore 187967.

Tel / Fax No: 6337 0508 Counseling Hotline: 63393558

Email: office@breastfeeding.org.sg

Web Page: <http://www.breastfeeding.org.sg>

Registry of Society Number: 0150/1990

HEF Registration Number: 0048/G

By the year 2008, these counsellors had fulfilled their commitment of volunteering one year on the Helpline. In appreciation, we will give them a Certificate during the AGM in 2008. They are :

Adeline Chew Goh	Cheng Swee Chin	Vanessa Lu
Alderline Wong	Chng Bee Wee	Goh Mui Ee
Celia Lim	Geraldine Tan	Stella Au

In the Annual Report for 2006, we missed out 1 counsellor, Yap Soon Lan, who should also receive her certificate for completing 1 year on the Helpline.

BMSG caught up with Ms Karolyn Vaughan, the new IBCLE Regional Director for Asia Pacific and Africa, during her visit to Singapore in early September 2007. An informal dinner with Karolyn was held at the Globetrotter Restaurant in United Square. Members of the BMSG Exco, BMSG Counsellors, ABAS representative (Siew Kwun), IBCLE Board Member (Doris Fok), and a few breastfeeding husbands attended this meeting.

BMSG Exco and counsellors shared with Karolyn the breastfeeding challenges faced by Singaporean mothers. Issues discussed were working & breastfeeding, society placing breastfeeding as an "option" of infant feeding side-by-side with formula feeding, lactation being a required study module in the NUS Medical School, the important role of fathers in supporting breastfeeding, human milk banking in Singapore and the restrictions placed by Islamic law on shared breastfeeding.

Another issue discussed was the insufficient number of Lactation Consultants in Singapore. Singapore has 41 LCs, which is insufficient as there are 30,000 - 40,000 babies born every year. BMSG fills the gap, and both BMSG and LC are working hand in hand to help mothers to breastfeed. The BMSG counsellors' shared dream is that one day breastfeeding will become so prevalent that all mothers can find their sisters, neighbours, mothers and other ladies around them to help them with breastfeeding.

Helpline

	2007	2006
Number of calls reported	1084	747
Number of Counsellors who submitted reports	18	15
Number of Active Counsellors as at December	34	38
Estimated number of calls	2074	1897
Average calls handled by a Counsellor	61	50

The number of reports submitted had increased significantly. This is because 5 counsellors submitted their reports for all 12 months compared to only 3 in 2006. The new counsellors who joined the group in 2007 also made an effort to submit their reports monthly. These efforts helped the group achieve a more accurate figure. The committee encourages all counsellors to make an effort to submit their monthly reports to help the group have a better understanding of the number of callers the Helpline can reach out to and the questions that the callers asked.

The ages of the babies of the callers are as follows:				
2007			2006	
No.	Callers	Category	Callers	Category
1 st	351	Still totally breastfed babies < 6 weeks old	208	Still totally breastfed babies < 6 weeks old
2 nd	158	Still totally breastfed babies between 6 weeks – 3 months old	125	Never fully breastfed their babies from birth
3 rd	135	Never fully breastfed their babies from birth	110	Still totally breastfed babies between 6 weeks – 3 months old

It is heartening to see that the category "Still totally breastfed babies from 6weeks - 3months" has moved up to be ranked second in 2007. It was ranked third in 2006.

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Most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the Helpline are:		
No.	2007	2006
1 st	Expressed breast milk – collection and storage	Sufficient milk? General assurance (4 th in 2005)
2 nd	Insufficient milk	Insufficient milk
3 rd	Understanding demand and supply	Diet-related: ginger, sesame oil, etc
4 th	Sufficient milk? General assurance	Weaning and bottle refusal
5 th	Latching problem	Understanding demand and supply (3 rd in 2005)
6 th	Engorgement	Sore nipples
7 th	Breast refusal/preference for bottle <i>and</i> Working Schedule & Expressing	Expressed breast milk – collection and storage (1 st in 2005)
8 th	Sore nipples	Supplementary feed (5 th in 2005)
9 th	Sick mother	Breast refusal/preference for bottle (10 th in 2005)
10 th	Duration between feeds	Weaning

From the list of FAQ above, we can see that the trend is moving along the line of more mothers working and pumping. This meets the profile of our membership where the group is seeing an increase in more members who are full-time-working-mothers compared to members who are stay-at-home-mothers.

More mothers also start to pump earlier than they should. If they feed their newborn expressed breast milk in a bottle before he turns one month old, there is a higher risk of nipple confusion. We can see this in the increased number of questions in “Latching problem” and “Breast refusal/preference for bottle.”

BMSG(S) will continue to train as many interested members as possible to be Volunteer Counsellors. The group wishes to express its appreciation to the volunteerism spirit of our counsellors in helping the group man the Helpline despite their busy schedule. We also appeal to those who are not counsellors to consider training as one, if you meet the criteria, so as to do your part in promoting breastfeeding and helping another mother in need.

Email Counseling

We see a significant drop in Email counseling, 30% or 279 to be exact.

Month	2007	2006
January	65	90
February	44	83
March	56	103
April	63	72
May	55	69
June	53	96
July	47	48
August	64	66
September	62	80
October	61	91
November	56	70
December	38	75
Total	664	943

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Workshops

We wish to thank the following Speakers for their continued and dedicated contribution to BMSG(S) :

1. Stella Au
2. Barbara Hun
3. Michelle Png
4. Sunitha Raman
5. Elizabeth Thng
6. Alderline Wong
7. Yap Tian Sew

Elizabeth Thng conducted her last workshop on 27th October 2007. She will retire thereafter to concentrate on her other passion, dancing. BMSG(S) would like to thank her for her many years of contribution and wishes her all the best. Joanna Peck will take over Elizabeth as the workshop speaker for *Breastfeeding in the 1st Month*.

BMSG conduct 4 series of workshops for expectant parents annually. Back to work talks are conducted monthly when there are available speakers and adequate demand. There are suggestions to increase the number of workshops which will help bring in more revenue for the group however we have a shortage of speakers.

The group is still searching for more speakers from our current pool of counsellors who are already busy with the Helpline. We are also working on updating the workshop notes and materials, especially the photos. The process is slow but we are hopeful it can be completed by next year.

Library

We did not acquire any new books for 2007. However, there was a decrease in the number of books borrowed, 13 books in 2007 (26 copies in 2006 & 14 copies in 2005). No video tapes were loaned out (4 in 2006 & 3 in 2005). With more mothers who are internet savvy, they're surfing the web for more breastfeeding information. The National Library also carries more books on breastfeeding.

Publications

We have reprinted another 10,000 booklets and these were distributed to hospitals, clinics and many other places to spread the breastfeeding message.

In August 2007, we published a bumper issue for our newsletter, "Keeping Abreast", to cover March 2007 - July 2007. The following issue was published in December 2007, covering the period from August 2007 - November 2007. Our most recent issue, March 2008, will cover the period December 2007 - February 2008.

The committee urges members to contribute articles and their breastfeeding experiences to the newsletter.

World Breastfeeding Week

By Cheng Swee Chin WBW 2007 Chairperson

The Children for Breastfeeding, Inc, a Philippine advocacy group, invited us to celebrate World Breastfeeding Week by establishing a new record for "The most women in synchronized breastfeeding around the world".

A total of 151 mothers in Singapore joined 18 other countries around the world to breastfeed from 10am-10.01am on 8th August 2007, in an attempt to break the Guinness World Record of Synchronized Breastfeeding in Multiple sites.

4 sites in Singapore participated in the event. The sites are :

Macpherson Community Club -	71 mothers	KK Women's and Children's Hospital -	28 mothers
Mt Alvernia Hospital -	33 mothers	National University Hospital -	19 mothers

The Guest of Honor, Mr. Matthias Yao Chi flagged off the synchronized breastfeeding at 10am sharp in Macpherson Community Club. The event was well publicized and covered by the media.

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	Date	Media	Titles
1.	22 Jul 2007	Newspaper	Sunday Times Life
2.	25 Jul 2007	Newspaper	Berita Harian
3.	27 July 2007	Radio	FM 97.2
4.	9 August 2007	Newspaper	The Straits Time, The New Paper, Lian He Zao Bao, Lian He Wan Bao
5.	9 August 2007	Radio	FM 93.1, FM 95.8
6.	9 August 2007	TV	Channel News Asia, Channel 8, Channel U
7.	9 August 2007	Internet	www.straitstimes.com , www.938live.sg , www.cnachinese.com , www.xin.sg

The committee commends the good work done by the WBW chairperson and the sub-committee namely Chng Bee Wee, Elaine Chan, and Vanessa Lu. We are thankful to Mt Alvernia, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, National University Hospital for their participation and our sponsors (MacPherson Community Club, Family Life Champions, Infantree Pte Ltd, Maternalove, and PharmaPlus).

Sale of Infant Food Ethics Committee Singapore (SIFECs) Report

By Alderline Wong BMSG(S) Representative to SIFECs

1. There was no meeting for 2007.
2. Sale of Infant Food Ethics Committee Singapore (SIFECs) has developed several new codes over the years due to new marketing practices of infant formula by the industry. The revision of the SIFECs booklet to incorporate the new code was printed in December 2007. There are a few copies of the 3rd Edition in the BMSG library which can be borrowed by members. Softcopy of the material can be downloaded from www.hpb.gov.sg/hpb/ere/ere0307.asp?id=1024.
3. Mr. Benjamin Lee will be taking over from Ms Karin Tan as SIFECs secretary with effect from 1 Jan 08. Please feel free to contact him at benjamin_lee@hpb.gov.sg should you notice any breaches of the Code of Ethics.

Association for Breastfeeding Advocacy Singapore (ABAS) Report to BMSG(S)

By Wan Siew Kwun BMSG(S) Representative to ABAS

ABAS's main thrust for 2007 was to develop a series of materials to support a sustained **campaign of awareness for the importance of breastfeeding**. Programmes to educate healthcare professionals to enable them to support the breastfeeding mother more effectively were continued. ABAS also participated in activities initiated by others, but which supported their aims to promote breastfeeding.

1. Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign. ABAS developed a pair of **posters** and a **campaign brochure** to be made available at healthcare facilities. The picture poster featured four attractive mum-and-baby pairs, by courtesy of Breastfeeding Mothers' Support Group (S) models and photos, to reflect the ethnic diversity in Singapore and to carry the message that breastfeeding is for all. The word poster highlighted the uniqueness of breast milk as the incomparable best food for infants with the tag line : **Breastfeed – because it's Perfect.** This message was further expanded in the brochure, which highlighted the real differences between breast milk and formula, and underlining the advantage of the former for babies. Campaign materials were launched in October, to coincide with HPB's announcement of new guidelines for child nutrition, which included recommending exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. The posters were sent to 1455 GP Clinics, Hospitals, polyclinics, OG and paediatric clinics were sent the posters and about six months' supply of brochures for their patients.

In 2006, ABAS formulated a **Breastfeeding Policy** and invited member associations to endorse the Policy. By December 2006, eight agencies had responded. A further call in early 2007 brought the endorsements to 10 in May, and 18 by August 2007. When the campaign materials were sent out, private clinics were invited to endorse as well. By November, 18 agencies and 65 private clinics had endorsed the Breastfeeding Policy.

2. Educating Healthcare Professionals. In 2007 ABAS conducted two Breastfeeding Workshops for nurses on 26 May and 24 November, and the target was Polyclinic nurses. A total of 62 and 51 polyclinic nurses attended respectively. In line with the launch of the Campaign materials, a Doctors' Seminar "*How to Manage Problems of the Mother-Child in the First Month*" was conducted on 3 November 2007. The speakers were Dr Charlotte Yung, Dr Yong Tze Tein and Dr Yvonne Ng. It was

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attended by 28 doctors, 58 hospital nurses, 21 polyclinic nurses and 21 others, totaling 114. There is still a great difficulty in reaching doctors effectively with breastfeeding education.

3. WHO / UNICEF Consultation on Breastfeeding, 19-21 June 2007. ABAS participated in this by sending two representatives, Dr Chua Mei Chien and Cynthia Pang, to accompany HPB's Representative, Karin Tan, to the Consultation in Manila. The purpose was to discuss common issues and challenges related to breastfeeding, implementation of the international code of marketing of breast milk substitutes and to identify strategic actions that will promote breastfeeding culture among mothers and health community with full health support system. The results of this useful Consultation will give further direction to ABAS's future programmes.

4. Supporting Activities. In August, several ABAS member hospitals participated in BMSG(S)'s initiative to provide sites for the Synchronised Breastfeeding World Record organized by the Philippines on 8 August 2007, in conjunction with World Breastfeeding Week. Karolyn Vaughan, new IBCLC Regional Administrator for IBLCE Asia Pacific visited Singapore in September and gave a series of lectures on Ethics and the Lactation Consultant, arranged by Doris Fok with ABAS Representatives at a number of hospitals. ABAS also provided a team to revise the HPB booklet on breastfeeding.

5. Administrative Support. The need for administrative support in ABAS has been helped greatly by engaging the part-time help of Eileen Tham for the Secretariat, as of January 2007.

6. Funding for ABAS. For 2007, ABAS received \$20,000 from HPB for ABAS projects. We are grateful for the active support from HPB in our efforts to promote breastfeeding in Singapore.

BMSG(S) had five Representatives in ABAS for 2007. Wan Siew Kwun continued to serve as Hon. Secretary in the ABAS Executive Committee. The other Representatives were Rebecca Chin, BMSG(S) President; Ivy Low, Manager, Operations; Sunitha Raman, Counsellor Trainer and Prof. Audrey Chia, Medical Liaison Officer.

Siew Kwun will not be continuing in the ABAS Exco for the 2008-2010 term. She has given impetus to the formation and growth of ABAS since 2001, and will have to give her time to elder-care for the next stage. BMSG(S) needs to appreciate the vital role it plays in the breastfeeding alliance of ABAS in Singapore. We are the only consumer voice, besides LLLI, in an alliance of members who are essentially offering breastfeeding services and support. It is my hope that others within BMSG(S) will come forward to be the voice for BMSG(S) within ABAS. What BMSG(S) is here to do can be more effectively accomplished in partnership with the healthcare professionals who form the bulk of ABAS. They have the inroads into many of their professional conferences and channels. But very often, it will be BMSG(S), and LLLI who need to call their attention to areas that need working on to build a sounder breastfeeding culture in Singapore. Sunitha Raman has agreed to be nominated for ABAS Exco in this next term, so that one or more of YOU can prepare to be ready to step in after her. Will YOU meet the challenge?

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