

New Books

Breast-Feeding, Suckling and the Sucking Urge: Their Development and Their Influence on the Developing Dentition. Larsson, Erik. Bishara, S (ed). 1999, Sweden. 37 pages, \$25.00. Available from the author: Tandregleringen, Kottorget 5, S52142, Falköping, Sweden. (e-mail: Larsson.afzelius@mailbox.calvpso.net).

Dr Erik Larsson, Professor of Orthodontics at the University of Oslo, has written *Breast-feeding, Suckling and the Sucking Urge*, a short and fascinating book that provides extensive information about breast-feeding, thumb-sucking, pacifier use, and their influence on dental occlusion and facial growth.

Using an anthropologic approach, he reveals how attitudes have changed from unrestricted breast-feeding to highly limited feeding restricted in both frequency and duration. He describes the use of wet nurses and reveals the relationship between breast-feeding and its effect on birth control. It is fascinating to read about the myths that arose in some cultures as late as the 15th century. B. Metlinger, author of one of the first pediatrics textbooks, advocated a wet nurse for the first 14 days claiming that the new mother's milk is of poor quality and it should be sucked off and discarded. He did not know this early milk was the colostrum, rich in antibodies and designed to protect infants from infection until they are able to produce their own antibodies.

The Industrial Period ushered in a new attitude toward breast-feeding. Women started to work outside the home and substitutes for breast-feeding were developed. Before long, bottle-feeding became popular, particularly in middle

and upper class families. Ironically, in recent years in America, increasing numbers of middle and upper class families have returned to breast-feeding, while poorer families continue to use formula feeding. (In third-world countries, the introduction of formula has been disastrous because of the poor quality of the water supply.)

Each of the 5 chapters begins with an abstract that concisely reveals the chapter's context. In chapter 4, entitled Artificial Sucking Habits, he writes, "Pacifiers, as we know them today, became available in the late 19th century. As a result of changes in infant feeding habits, pacifier- and digit-sucking became more common during the late 20th century." He compares the influence of pacifier use with both finger and thumb sucking. He has specific programs for helping parents to end damaging sucking habits. Professor Larsson recommends introducing a pacifier if the child develops a digit-sucking habit, because pacifiers have more benign effects on the occlusion than fingers and thumbs. In addition, pacifiers are more easily separated from the child. He describes the most likely outcome of sucking habits that continue beyond certain ages.

Orthodontists and pedodontists will find much information in this book that will broaden their understanding of the dynamics of the impact of sucking habits.

The book has 92 references, many of which are from American journals. Dr Samir Bishara served as editor of the book making it a felicitous read.

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