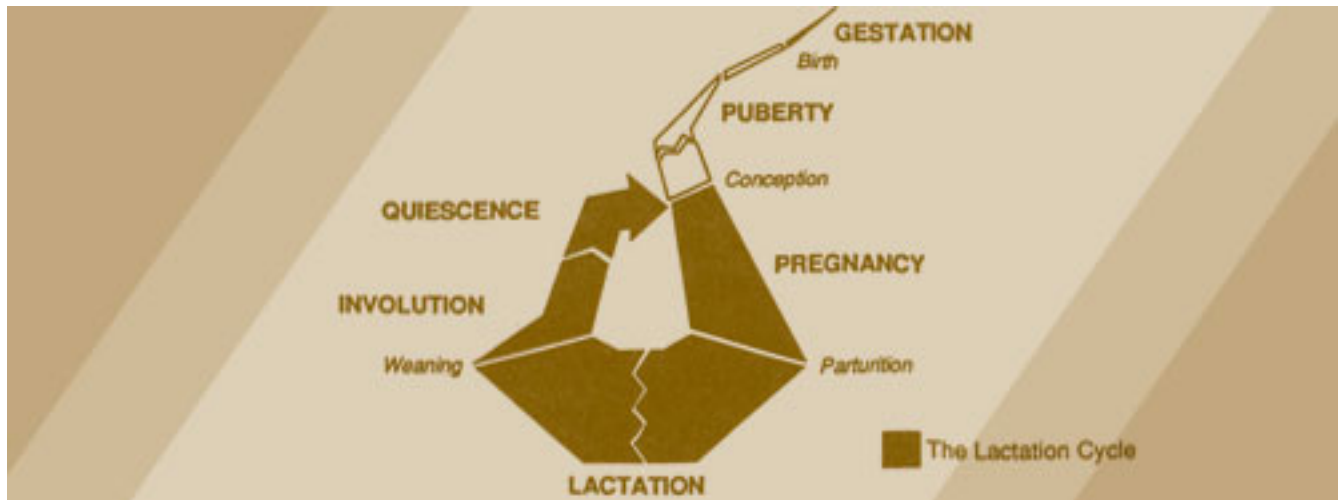




Breastfeeding: Science and Society



There is general recognition that breastfeeding is a benefit to infants in terms of nourishment and prevention of disease, and it also benefits mothers in terms of maternal bonding and the spacing of births.

In recent years there has been much research in different areas and among people of various cultures. Scientists now have information on how breastfeeding positively influences child development and protects the child from infectious disease. There is also scientific data on the qualities of milk, and on the factors that encourage women to initiate and maintain breastfeeding.

The Pontifical Academy of Sciences and The Royal Society cosponsored a scientific meeting that will bring together many of the scientists engaged in research on breastfeeding. The purpose of this meeting is to create a forum for the presentation of the research and conduct a high-level scientific discussion on the present data. This information can be shared with the scientific community and can also be given wider circulation so as to encourage breastfeeding and give assurance to mothers who breastfeed their infants.