

Dear Dr. Gupta,

Thank you for your letter regarding NTNU Professor Sven Magnus Carlsen's research on breastfeeding published in *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica*, and the subsequent press release issued by the university featuring his research and commentary. While we respect your organization's opinion on the findings, we must respectfully decline your request to remove the press release from our webpages. We stand by Professor Carlsen's right to publish his research and to comment on this research as presented in the press release.

NTNU uses press releases as a tool to disseminate research results, but the commentary in the press releases does not necessarily represent the opinion of the institution. As a university, one of our most important missions is to convey research findings to society at large. Researchers must communicate what they learn to the public, even when their results challenge established wisdom or are "politically incorrect". Openness and the freedom to express ideas, analyses and research findings are the cornerstones of a free society and the very foundation of building new knowledge.

Unfortunately Professor Carlsen's research regarding breastfeeding and hormones, and his comments regarding other research findings, have been interpreted as a universal attack on breastfeeding. This is not the case. Breastfeeding conveys many benefits, as outlined in Professor Carlsen's comments in our press release.

Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish between Professor Carlsen's opinions and the official NTNU position. It is not NTNU's role as an institution to challenge breastfeeding guidelines issued either by the Norwegian government or WHO. As an academic institution we conduct and disseminate research information, but it is the job of the health authorities to develop advice on breastfeeding based on all available information. NTNU as an institution does not as a rule express opinions that contradict guidelines from the government, and we recognize that it is an important mission of the government to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

We acknowledge your concerns about the consequences of the press release, and agree that the section that underscored the importance of breastfeeding in developing countries should have been presented higher up in the press release.

Yours truly,



Torbjørn Digernes

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All correspondence that is part of the case being processed is to be addressed to the relevant unit at NTNU, not to individuals. Please use our reference with all enquiries.