

The COVID-19 Infant Feeding Research Interest Group and Working Group

Learn what the research tells us about safe infant feeding practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

In response to concerns about the potential impact of SARS-COV-2 in human milk, staff from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) of the National Institutes of Health convened a group of scientists, agencies, and organizations to answer core questions about the transmission of SARS-COV-2 (COVID-19) via human milk/breastfeeding. This group, the COVID-19 Infant Feeding Research Interest Group (CIF-RIG), meets monthly to discuss research and evidence related to infant feeding practices and COVID-19. As a member, USAID Advancing Nutrition supports the CIF-RIG's efforts by coordinating the monthly meetings, contributing technical content and expertise, and hosting the web platform for sharing relevant information, events, and resources at: <https://www.advancingnutrition.org/what-we-do/monitoring-evaluation-and-learning/CIF-RIG-and-WG>.



The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is accompanied by a flood of information, making the need for timely, clear, evidence-based guidance for frontline health providers and families critical. As researchers work to better understand the virus and how it is transmitted, translating research into actionable guidance is imperative.

Purpose of the CIF-RIG

The CIF-RIG represents an informal multidisciplinary collaboration of international experts from around the world focused on the identification of research needs and what current and emerging research tells us about safe infant feeding practices during this pandemic. Meeting monthly, the CIF-RIG provides a venue for sharing, learning, and engaging with participating members, agencies, organizations, academics, and civil society on the state of research and evidence, as it relates to infant feeding practices and COVID-19.

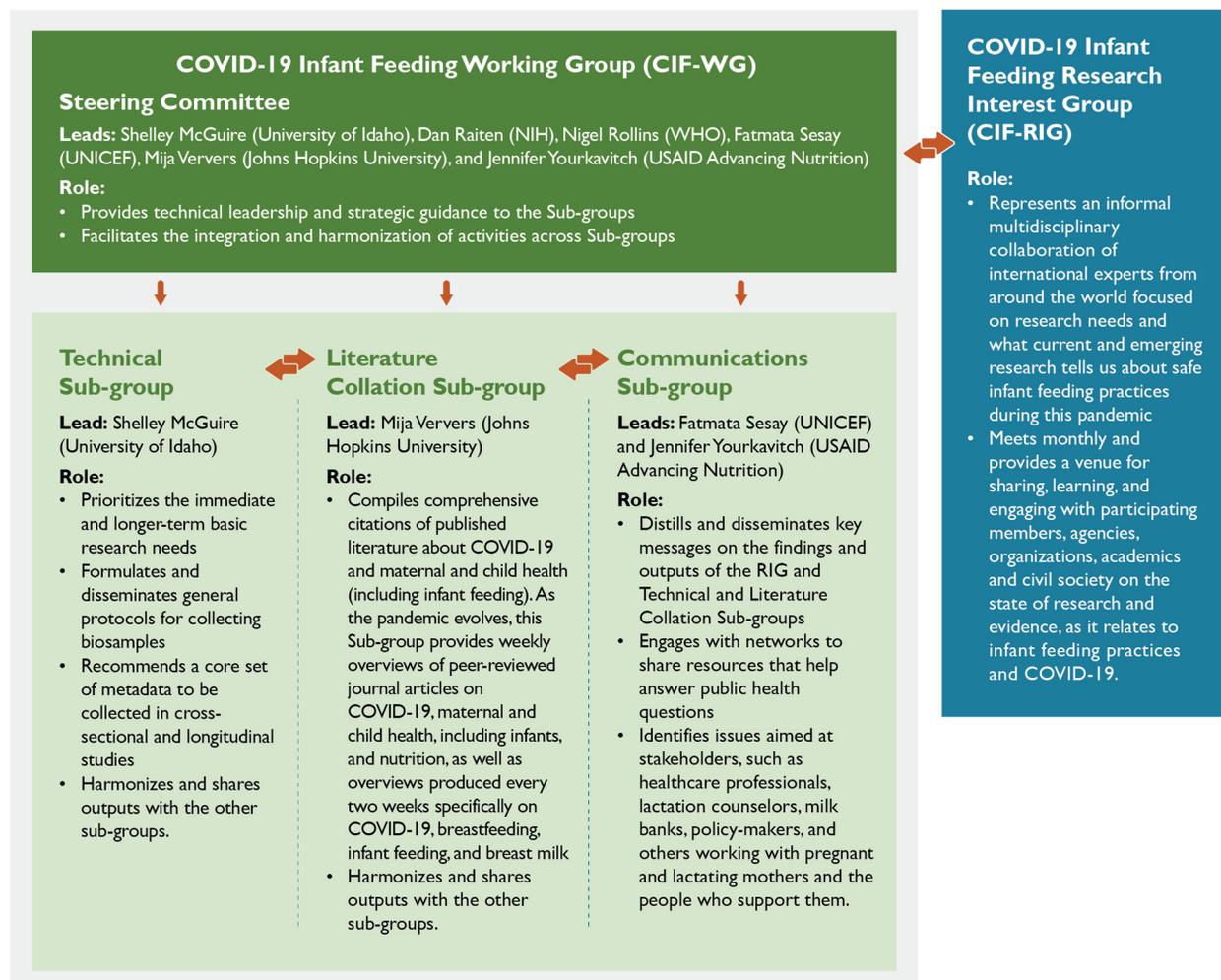
The CIF-RIG focuses on four key objectives: 1) harmonize the state of the science and best practices with regard to current approaches to study the biology and impact of the virus; 2) identify priority research questions; 3) collect, collate, and share extant and evolving data on the virus and its implications; and 4) support efforts to develop useful and clear messages targeting improved public health and evidence-based standards of care.

Shortly after the initiation of the CIF-RIG, the World Health Organization (WHO) Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (MNCAH) initiated the COVID-19 Research Network to collaborate on research needs in response to the pandemic, including infant feeding. The CIF-RIG and WHO MNCAH Research Network joined efforts as the COVID-19 Infant Feeding Working Group (CIF-WG).

Purpose of the CIF-WG

The CIF-WG was created to broaden engagement and focus on projects to support the same four key objectives of the CIF-RIG (i.e., harmonize, prioritize, share, and communicate). As depicted below, its three sub-groups—technical, literature collation, and communications—are overseen by a steering committee. The CIF-WG develops and implements projects to produce outputs that reflect the continuum from research to translation.

ORGANIZATION OF CIF-RIG AND CIF-WG



Interested in getting involved? Join monthly CIF-RIG information-sharing sessions or become a member

The CIF-RIG hosts monthly one-hour information-sharing and learning sessions that include: 1) informal updates on CIF-WG projects; 2) presentations from the field on the state of research and evidence on infant feeding and COVID-19; and 3) updates from the WHO MNCAH Research Network. Recent topics include sampling and analysis of human milk for SARS-CoV-2, including immune responses; validation of protocols for biosample collections; public health approaches and programmatic responses to COVID-19 and infant feeding; and how messaging and implementation strategies need to change as

the evidence mounts. Anyone interested in attending these sessions is welcome. To register or access recordings of previous learning sessions, please visit the USAID Advancing Nutrition website at: <https://www.advancingnutrition.org/what-we-do/monitoring-evaluation-and-learning/CIF-RIG-and-WG>.

Sign up for CIF-WG news and updates

Stay abreast of the key findings from emerging and evolving research to ensure your infant and young child feeding programs, guidelines, and policies align with current evidence and recommended practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Subscribe today by visiting <https://www.advancingnutrition.org/what-we-do/monitoring-evaluation-and-learning/CIF-RIG-and-WG>.

Access or sign up to receive weekly overviews of peer-reviewed journal articles on [COVID-19, maternal and child health, and nutrition](#) and bi-weekly overviews on [COVID-19, breastfeeding, infant feeding, and breast milk](#) from Johns Hopkins University.

Other COVID-19 and Breastfeeding Resources

- [Frequently asked questions: COVID-19 vaccines and breastfeeding based on WHO SAGE interim recommendations \(WHO\)](#)
- [Brief on aligning best practices and addressing misinformation for optimal infant feeding during the COVID-19 pandemic \(PATH\)](#)
- [Brief on key messages related to evidence on transmission of COVID in breastmilk \(USAID Advancing Nutrition\)](#)
- [Brief on aligning best practices and addressing misinformation for optimal infant feeding during the COVID-19 pandemic \(PATH\)](#)
- [Frequently asked questions: Breastfeeding and COVID-19 for health care workers \(WHO\)](#)
- [Video on breastfeeding safely during the COVID-19 pandemic \(UNICEF\)](#)
- [Breastfeeding and COVID-19 Scientific Brief \(WHO\)](#)
- [Steps for adapting graphics and recommended practices from infant and young child feeding recommendations when COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed \(USAID Advancing Nutrition, UNICEF\)](#)

Acknowledgement

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