

Understanding Social Media's Impact on Breastfeeding Black Millennials

Yasmeen Lee

Dr. Stephanie Baker

Public Health Department, Elon University



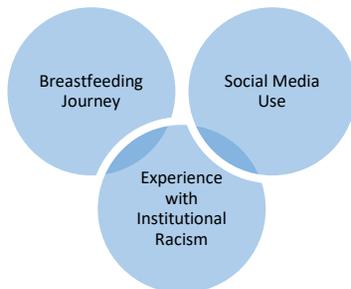
Background

Breastmilk provides specific development needs for babies by including antibodies and proteins necessary for a healthy brain and to fight off disease (Hale, 2007). The World Health Organization (2018) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months so the mother can pass these nutrients to her baby. In the United States, there are differences in breastfeeding initiation and exclusive breastfeeding at 6 months by race/ethnicity. Research indicates that 83% of Asian mothers, 80.6% of Hispanic mothers, 77.7% of white mothers and only 59.7% of black mothers initiate breastfeeding (Jones, Power, Queenan, & Schulkin, 2015). In terms of exclusive breastfeeding at six months, 56.4% of Asian mothers, 46% of Hispanic mothers, 45.1% of white mothers and only 27.9% of black mothers achieve this milestone (Jones, Power, Queenan, & Schulkin, 2015). Black mothers significantly breastfeed less than any other racial/ethnic group.

Methods

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach that encompassed a quantitative start a qualitative follow-up:

Quantitative: 48-item Qualtrics survey distributed via social media platforms and emails to the leaders of breastfeeding and black maternal health organizations (n=51)



Qualitative: 3 focus groups were held with participants (n=15) utilizing a focus group guide that was created from the quantitative results

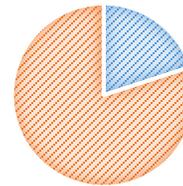
Results

Quantitative Results

BREASTFEEDING

■ BF < 6 months ■ BF > 6 months

Women who didn't report any experiences of racism from the Major Experiences of Discrimination Scale (Job Promotion, Bank Loan, Job Hiring, Police Experience, Continued Education, Neighborhood) were 11 times more likely to have breastfed for 6 months or longer



Variable	B	S.E.	Significance	Exp(B)
No Experiences	2.398	1.209	.047	11.003
Education Discouragement	-1.206	1.046	.249	.300
Neighborhood	-.372	.624	.551	.689
Breastfeeding in Public	1.061	1.033	.305	2.888
Black Lactation Consultants	.354	1.056	.732	1.425

The variables, discouragement to continue education and unfair prevention from moving into a neighborhood, had a statistical significance of $p=.047$, and reduced the chances that women breastfed for 6 months or longer

Qualitative Results

Institutional Racism & Barriers

"I'm just going to tell you this with a smile, but you're black so you're not going to be successful at this anyway."

Black Experiences

"Where?" I guess that's sad in and of itself. Where am I going to get the best care? I didn't think about us, because I've never seen us in this capacity."

Social Media Impact

"My community then became people that were online.Even though it's not human contact, but it's human presence."

Breastfeeding in the Millennial Age

"I feel like we're the first generation to really be okay on a broad scale, broad spectrum, of going against what our parents did"

Challenges to Motherhood

"As being a first time mom, I didn't have the recognition of knowing what milestones I needed to be reaching."

Hopes for the Community

I feel like the only way that we can learn and share information with each other is by uplifting each other."

Conclusion

Major experiences of racism play a significant role in a mother's breastfeeding duration. However, higher rates of seeing representation of black women related to lactation, results in a higher likelihood of breastfeeding past the recommended six months.

Further research should be done to study the impact of socioeconomic status and social media use versus social support groups.

References

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