Abstract:

Introduction: The health of children and adults can be affected by nutritional intake during the first year of life. The Healthy People 2010 Objectives of increasing breastfeeding initiation and continuing breastfeeding through the first year of life remain unrealized. The purpose was to determine if income level and the mother’s perception of her support affected the continuation of breastfeeding through the first 6 weeks postpartum. The specific aim was to evaluate the relationship between income level, the perceived support, and breastfeeding at 6 weeks.

Method(s): The Personal Support Matrix Score (PSMS) was developed using 16 questions that ranked the responses of the mother on her perception of support at the time of delivery (Time 1) and at 6 weeks postpartum (Time 2). Eighty-five postpartum women were contacted weekly to determine continuation of breastfeeding and the most supportive person that week. An exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted to determine which concepts in the scale were being examined.

Results: The concepts of encouragement and discouragement were found to be the specific characteristics of the PSMS. Four areas of encouragement were measured: Family, Co-worker, Friend, and Professional. Due to the low loadings and limited variability, Professional items were dropped. Based on the remaining items, four subscales were identified: Family encouragement, Co-Worker encouragement, and Friend encouragement and Non-Family discouragement. The assumption of increased encouragement equaling decreased discouragement was evident within
the family subscale due to encouragement and discouragement loading together. However, the Friend and Co-Worker items created 3 subscales due to the discouragement items loading separately from encouragement.

Discussion & Conclusions: Findings from this PSMS study showed that women with a higher PSMS score at delivery were more likely to be breastfeeding at 6 weeks postpartum than those with a lower score. Those with higher income show significantly higher amounts of friend support. The importance of support with breastfeeding is not a new concept; however, the importance of identifying mothers at risk prior to hospital discharge must be addressed.

Abstract History:
This abstract has been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.
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