



Characteristics Associated with Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration among WIC Participants, 2011

Angel Watson¹, MPH, RHIA and Cheryl L. Clark², DrPH, RHIA

Florida Department of Health, ¹Bureau of WIC Program Services and ²Division of Community Health Promotion

INTRODUCTION

Breastfeeding is recognized as an essential part of assuring the best health for infants.

Benefits of breastfeeding for the infant include:

- Enhanced cognitive development
- Reduced risk of obesity, diabetes, and asthma
- Increased immunity against infectious diseases such as respiratory infections, diarrhea, bacterial meningitis, bacteremia, and otitis media.

Definitions:

- **Breastfeeding Initiation:** Women who reported current or ever breastfeeding at the time of information collection.
- **Breastfeeding Duration:** Of women who reported initiating breastfeeding, the length of time infant was breastfed was measured by time period reported or calculated based on last WIC visit date.

STUDY QUESTION

What maternal characteristics are associated with breastfeeding initiation and duration?

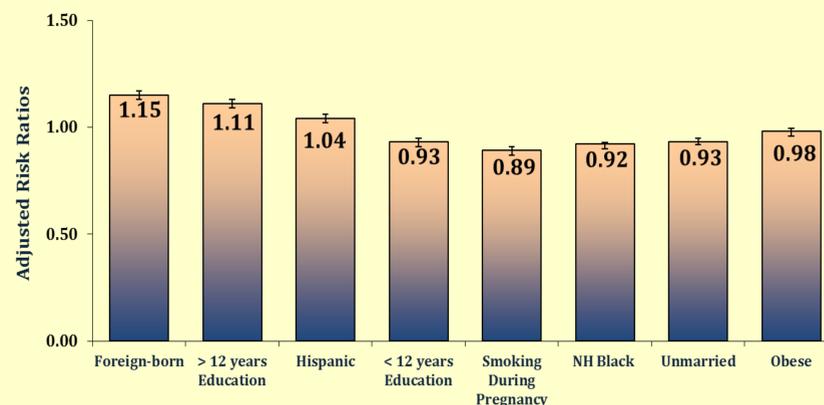
METHODS

Florida WIC administrative data for 2011 was used to perform this analysis. Risk Ratios (RR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) were computed using multivariate binomial regression. Regression Models were adjusted for maternal race/ethnicity, age, education, smoking status, marital status, pre-pregnancy BMI, place of birth, and infant birth weight. All analyses were performed using Stata/SE 12.1.



RESULTS

Figure 1: Adjusted Risk Ratios for Characteristics Significantly Associated with Breastfeeding Initiation, 2011



Breastfeeding Initiation:

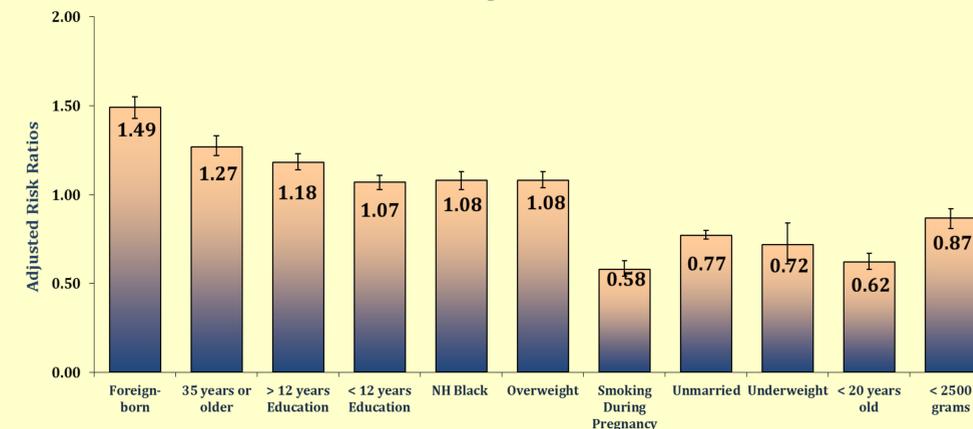
In 2011, 76% of prenatal WIC participants initiated breastfeeding. After adjusting for factors that influence breastfeeding, characteristics associated with breastfeeding initiation were as follows (Figure 1):

- Foreign-born participants were 15% more likely to initiate breastfeeding compared to US-born participants.
- Participants with 12 years or more education were 11% more likely to initiate breastfeeding compared to participants with less than 12 years education.
- Hispanic participants were 4% more likely to initiate breastfeeding compared to Non-Hispanic participants.
- Participants with less than 12 years education were 7% less likely to initiate breastfeeding compared to participants with 12 years education.
- Participants who smoked were 11% less likely to initiate breastfeeding compared to participants who did not smoke.
- Non-Hispanic Black participants were 8% less likely to initiate breastfeeding compared to Non-Hispanic White participants.
- Unmarried participants were 7% less likely to initiate breastfeeding compared to married participants.
- Obese participants were 2% less likely to initiate breastfeeding compared to healthy weight participants.

CONCLUSIONS

- Most participants initiated breastfeeding; however, only a small percentage continued to breastfeed at 6 months.
- The findings of this study are comparable to other studies, with one exception our study found that compared to Non-Hispanic White participants, Non-Hispanic Black participants were more likely to breastfeed at 6 months.

Figure 2: Adjusted Risk Ratios for Characteristics Significantly Associated with Breastfeeding at 6 Months, 2011



Breastfeeding at 6 months:

Among the participants who initiated breastfeeding, 20% breastfed at 6 months. After adjustment, characteristics associated with breastfeeding at 6 months were as follows (Figure 2):

- Foreign-born participants were 49% more likely to breastfeed at 6 months compared to US-born participants.
- Participants 35 years or older (27%) were more likely to breastfeed at 6 months while participants who were less than 20 years of age (38%) less likely to breastfeed at 6 months compared to participants 20 to 34 years of age.
- Participants with more than 12 years education (18%) and participants with less than 12 years education (7%) were more likely to breastfeed at 6 months compared to participants with 12 years education.
- Non-Hispanic Black participants were 8% more likely to breastfeed at 6 months compared to Non-Hispanic White participants.
- Overweight participants were 8% more likely to breastfeed at 6 months compared to healthy weight participants.
- Participants who smoked were 42% less likely to breastfeed at 6 months compared to participants who did not smoke.
- Unmarried participants were 23% less likely to breastfeed at 6 months compared to married participants.
- Underweight participants were 28% less likely to breastfeed at 6 months compared to healthy weight participants.
- Participants with an infant weighing less than 2500 grams were 13% less likely to breastfeed at 6 months compared to participants with infants weighing more than 2500 grams.

IMPLICATIONS

- Various factors influence breastfeeding initiation and duration; therefore, health promotion efforts must consider a wide range of personal, social, and cultural factors.
- Research has shown the “Loving Support © through Peer Counseling Model” increases breastfeeding initiation and duration rates. In 2010, the Florida WIC Program expanded this model statewide.