

THE EFFECT OF WORK STATUS ON BREASTFEEDING INITIATION AND DURATION

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Presenter Disclosures

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“No relationships to disclose”

Motivation & Objective

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- Importance of breastfeeding in developed countries is increasingly emphasized
- National U.S. health objectives call for exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and breastfeeding duration for at least 12 months
- More U.S. mothers of infants are participating in the workforce
- Postpartum return to work is associated with lower rates of initiation and shorter duration of breastfeeding in the United States
- Previous work has investigated the relation between employment and breastfeeding, but the focus has primarily been on full-time vs. non-working groups
- We analyze the effect of full-time and part-time employment on breastfeeding initiation and duration

Data – Infant Feeding Practices Study II

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- Conducted by the FDA in collaboration with the CDC from May 2005 to June 2007
- Longitudinal study of women from late pregnancy through their infant's first year of life - 12 surveys (primarily mail)
 - 1 prenatal questionnaire
 - 1 telephone interview near the time of the infant's birth
 - 1 neonatal questionnaire at infant age 1 month
 - 9 questionnaires sent about every 4 weeks during infant ages 2 to 7 months and then approximately every 7 weeks until infant age 12 months
- 4902 qualified pregnant women completed the prenatal questionnaire
- Model 1 ($N = 1964$): *Breastfeeding Initiation* - if mother ever breastfed her infant; Logistic regression
- Model 2 ($N = 1470$): *Breastfeeding Duration* - infant's age in weeks when breastfeeding completely stopped; Censored regression

Independent Variables

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- Common in both models
 - Total available maternity leave - no leave, ≤ 6 wk, 7-12 wk, >12 wk and not working
 - Demographics – Age, education, income, marital status
 - Interaction between parity & previous experience
 - Medical and health variables - # nights in hospital, physician as birth attendant, # cigarettes/day during pregnancy
 - Social support for breastfeeding - # friends who breastfed, mother was breastfed, attended any class that discussed breastfeeding
- Additional variables
 - Model 1: prenatal expectation of postpartum work status (≥ 35 h, 20-34 h, 1-19 h, none); amount of leave taken after delivery (≤ 12 wk, >12 wk)
 - Model 2: amount of leave taken after delivery x work status (≤ 12 wk, ≥ 35 h; ≤ 12 wk, 20-34 h; ≤ 12 wk, 1-19 h; >12 wk, ≥ 35 h; >12 wk, 20-34 h; >12 wk, 1-19 h; and not working); feeding (baby fed on schedule, fed on demand, fed sometimes on demand, sometimes on schedule); comfortable nursing around close women friends

Descriptive Statistics - Model 1

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- 86.5% initiated breastfeeding
- Prenatal expectation of postpartum work status
 - ≥ 35 h: 29.3%
 - 20-34 h: 22.1%
 - 1-19 h: 11.3%
 - None: 37.3%
- Amount of leave taken after delivery
 - ≤ 12 wk: 39.8%
 - > 12 wk: 60.2%

Descriptive Statistics - Model 2

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- Mean # of weeks breastfeeding = 31.6
- Amount of leave taken after delivery × work status
 - ≤12 wk, ≥35 h: 18.7%
 - ≤12 wk, 20-34 h: 9%
 - ≤12 wk, 1-19 h: 12.3%
 - >12 wk, ≥35 h: 4.7%
 - >12 wk, 20-34 h: 4.2%
 - >12 wk, 1-19 h: 7.4%
 - Not working: 43.7%
- Feeding
 - Baby fed on schedule: 7.6%
 - Baby fed on demand: 52.6%
 - Baby fed sometimes on demand, sometimes on schedule: 39.8%
- Comfortable nursing around close women friends: 71.6%

Descriptive Statistics – Common Variables

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- Maternity leave available (prenatal)
 - No leave – 10.7%
 - ≤ 6 wk – 13.4%
 - > 6 but ≤ 12 wk – 20%
 - > 12 wk – 6.9%
 - Not working – 49%
- Demographics - 28.2 y mean age; 38.8% college or higher educated; \$43,600 median income; 79% married
- Parity \times previous breastfeeding experience - 32.3% no children, 7.7% with 1 child & no experience, 4.6% with ≥ 2 children & no experience; 31.2% with 1 child & experience; 24.2% with ≥ 2 children & experience
- Medical and health variables - 3.1 # nights in hospital on average; 88.9% had physician as birth attendant; 1.1 # cigarettes/day during pregnancy on average
- Social support for breastfeeding – 2.6% friends who breastfed; 49.4% mothers were breastfed; 60.3% did not attend any breastfeeding class

Breastfeeding Initiation (Results)

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- Only expecting to work full time was significantly associated with decreased odds of initiation
 - Adjusted initiation rate for the full-time work category was significantly lower than for non-working mothers (81.9% vs. 87.5%, $P < 0.05$) and marginally lower than for mothers working 1-19 h/wk (81.9% vs. 88.8%, $P=0.08$)
- Maternity leave
 - Available maternity leave did not affect initiation
 - Amount of leave actually taken also not significant in explaining initiation
- Positive relation - mother having been breastfed as infant
- Negative relation - number of cigarettes smoked daily during pregnancy, and not attending a class that discussed breastfeeding
- Parity \times previous breastfeeding experience
 - Mothers with other children who had not previously breastfed were much less likely than new mothers to initiate breastfeeding
 - Mothers with other children who had previously breastfed were much more likely to initiate.

Breastfeeding Duration (Results)

- Maternity leave taken by work status
 - Among mothers who returned to work in the first 12 weeks postpartum
 - Working ≥ 20 hours per week (30 weeks) had a strong negative effect on duration relative to not working (43.2 weeks)
 - But working < 20 hours per week (40 weeks) only had a marginal negative effect
 - Full-time work was associated with shorter duration than part-time work < 35 h/wk (28.3 weeks vs. 36 weeks, $P < 0.01$)
 - Among mothers who returned to work after 12 weeks
 - Working full-time (24.8 weeks, $P < 0.05$) decreased duration relative to not working
 - But working any type of part-time (35.6 weeks) schedule did not
 - Part-time workers spent an average 40.9 weeks breastfeeding compared with a significantly shorter duration of 32.7 weeks among full-time workers ($P < 0.05$)

Breastfeeding Duration (Results cont.)

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- Available maternity leave was not significantly associated with duration
- Negative relation - number of cigarettes smoked daily during pregnancy, and not attending a class that discussed breastfeeding
- Feeding schedule
 - Mothers who had not previously breastfed had significantly shorter durations than those who had breastfed before
 - Mothers who breastfed on demand had longer duration than those who breastfed on schedule
- Mothers who reported being comfortable nursing around close women friends breastfed longer than those who reported not being comfortable in the neonatal survey

Conclusions

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- Full-time employment remains a significant barrier to breastfeeding while part-time work has much less impact
 - Particularly if the mother does not return to work until after 12 weeks postpartum
- The research team concludes that workplace support for breastfeeding will be more effective
 - If it includes viable options for part-time work when the mother first returns to work
 - If it includes adequate leave for mothers