BACKGROUND

- 79% of the nation’s mothers initiate breastfeeding after the birth of their babies.
- 49.4% continue to breastfeed and 18.8% continue to exclusively breastfeed for the recommended duration of six months remains.

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014)

On average 11-18% of women wean or stop exclusive breastfeeding during the first 4 weeks (Cameron, Hesketh, Ball, Crawford, & Campbell, 2010; Schefer, Watt, Knueger, & Sword, 2008) whereas some studies have noted attrition rates as low as 5% (Tahir & Al-Sadat, 2013) and as high as 34% (Semenic, Luselle, Gottlieb, 2008)

Since 1990 some qualitative breastfeeding research has been performed, but the quantity is still sparse and lacking in the first four weeks postpartum.

OBJECTIVE

The first four weeks postpartum are critical for establishing successful breastfeeding because many women wean or stop exclusive breastfeeding during this time.

This study explored the breastfeeding concerns of mothers during the first four weeks postpartum and the support sought for those concerns.

PARTICIPANTS

Four mothers, recruited from central Indiana in 2014 through social media or word of mouth.

Inclusion criteria:
- Women in their first four to six weeks postpartum.
- Delivered full term healthy babies.
- Discharged from the hospital breastfeeding.
- Four mothers, recruited from central Indiana in 2014 through social media or word of mouth.

Exclusion criteria:
- Mothers identified concerns related to themselves and their infants with respect to breastfeeding in the first four weeks postpartum.
- Concerns indicate the women’s struggle with establishing a successful breastfeeding pattern and one that is compromised by infant latch difficulty, nipple pain and inadequate milk production.
- Support was sought at multiple levels from health care professionals to social media.
- The findings suggest that support from health care professionals who provide valuable information is important.
- Postpartum women also utilize other support methods when encountering breastfeeding concerns in the first four weeks postpartum.
- Interventions to assist postpartum women with establishing breastfeeding outside of the hospital setting need to consider using social media and social networks as resources for breastfeeding information and support.

METHODS

Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted and data were analyzed using content analysis.

1. Interview transcripts were first coded.
2. Codes with similar meaning were grouped into categories.
3. Categories sharing similar features were again collapsed into common themes.

RESULTS

Table 1: Breastfeeding Concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: Infant breastfeeding difficulties</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Representative Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latch</td>
<td></td>
<td>Just the fact that she wouldn’t latch on and I was worried that she wasn’t going to gain any weight. (ID 1, p. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When I was ... well, since we were having problems latching, when I was discharged, that was definitely my concern. (ID 2, p. 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nipple pain with feeding</td>
<td></td>
<td>I felt like we finally getting a good latch, but because of that, I had very sore nipples. (ID 2, p. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>His latch wasn’t really painful in the beginning, but it was pinching and I figured it would hurt. I was out of practice for about four and a half years, but just after the second week when I kept hurting I realized that something was probably wrong, but looked at his mouth and, yes, it was tight and it was confirmed by the dentist as well. (ID 3, p. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nipple trauma</td>
<td></td>
<td>We actually, when I left the hospital, like I said, my nipples were really sore and cracked already. On night number two, after we came home, I fed her and when I pulled her off my nipple was actually bleeding. (ID 2, p. 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Breastfeeding Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: Breastfeeding support</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Representative Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional support</td>
<td></td>
<td>I went to my OB and talked to the nurses there. I did talk to a lactation consultant and got advice for both of them. (ID 1, p. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Lactation consultant’s name] or [Lactation consultant’s name], the two nurses at [hospital name] that are the lactation specialists. (ID 2, p. 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational support</td>
<td>Facebook groups, friends (ID 3, p. 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFERENCE


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CONCLUSIONS

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