

Exploring the Factors that Influence Adolescent Mother's Choice of Infant Feeding Method

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Purpose of Study

- To explore and understand the factors that influence adolescent mother's (16-19 years old) in their choice of infant feeding method

Existing Literature

Intrapersonal Factors:

- Socialization in the home environment (Greene, Stewart-Knox & Wright, 2003).
- Exposure to breastfeeding (Goulet, Marcil & Ross, 2003).

Interpersonal Factors:

- Significant others and their mothers. (Harner & McCarter-Spaulling, 2004)

Institutional Factors:

- Nurses in the hospital and PHN's (Nelson & Sethi, 2005).

Community Factors:

- Societal attitudes (Volpe & Bear, 2000).

Public Policy Factors:

- NS Human Right's Commission's Policy
- NS Breastfeeding Policy
- Public Health and IWK Health Care Breastfeeding Policy
- Baby-Friendly Initiative Designation

Methodology & Method

- Interpretative Phenomenology (Heideggerian).
 - Opportunity to *interpret* and *understand* the adolescent mother's *lived experience*
 - Researcher is a co-participant

Participants

- Purposeful sample (Patton, 2002). N=9
- 16-19 years old within Capital Health District, Nova Scotia
- Age
 - 16-18 (5)
 - 19- (4)
- Feeding Practice:
 - Formula (2)
 - Exclusive Breastfeeding (3)
 - Partial Breastfeeding (4)
- Ethnic/Racial Identity:
 - Caucasian (6)
 - African Canadian (2)
 - First Nations (1)

Data Collection

- ❑ Two face-to-face semi-structured interviews (approx. 90 minutes in length)
- ❑ Taped Interviews
- ❑ Reflective Journaling

Data Analysis

- Thematic Analysis

- Codes (Miles & Heuberman, 1994).

- Patterns

- Themes

(Diekelmann, Allen & Tanner, 1989 as cited in Draucker, 1999).

Findings & Interpretation

- 1) Aspiring to be a Good Mother
- 2) Impact of Breastfeeding on Their Personal Lives & Lifestyle Choices
- 3) The Role of Social Support with Adolescent Mother's Infant Feeding Choice
- 4) Dealing with Mixed Messages: Breastfeeding in a Bottle Feeding Community

Aspiring to be a Good Mother

- Infant Feeding Choice and the Good Mother vs. Bad Mother Identity
- Health Benefits of Breastfeeding
- The Bonding Experience

Infant Feeding Choice and the Good Mother vs. Bad Mother Identity

- *“It was pressure, they made it seem like if I didn’t breastfeed (the baby’s paternal grandmother and the baby’s father) they would be mad at me, that I wouldn’t be a good mother, and then when I didn’t breastfeed, I didn’t want to disappoint them”.*

Health Benefits of Breastfeeding

- *“ I really wanted to try and breastfeed, I was the only child out of my mom’s four that she didn’t breastfeed. The others are perfectly healthy, and I feel that I was the less healthy of them all. I feel that breastfeeding was a good choice and more healthy for my baby”.*

The Bonding Experience

- *“If others were meant to feed my baby, they would have milk in their boobs too. But they don’t, so I will gladly take the role. I love him, and I love feeling that close. I love having him with me at all times. Like, I said before, I get the cutest faces out of him, when we go some where, people want to hold him, I make the excuse that it’s time to feed him so we can go in another room and have our time. It’s our guaranteed time together”.*

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- *“ My sister-in-law is breastfeeding and her little guy is spoiled rotten now because he is breastfeeding, and he’ll fall asleep, so she puts him over her shoulder and he sleeps for two hours, she’ll sit there for two hours and will not move. Another thing, if she leaves him somewhere for an hour or so to go and get groceries, he cries the entire time, and you cannot get him to stop until he hears her voice. I could not see spoiling him like that. I think breastfeeding creates such a bonding experience that it would be more difficult to get away from him (the baby)”.*

Impact of Breastfeeding on Their Personal Lives & Lifestyle Choices

- Lifestyle Restrictions
- Loss of Freedom

Lifestyle Restrictions

- *“ You are still an adolescent so you want to go out and party, you can’t do anything when you are breastfeeding, especially smoke, some don’t think about it. I’d rather bottle-feed rather than smoke and breastfeed because it is bad for your child”.*

Loss of Freedom

- *“Well juggling being a young breastfeeding mom and trying to have a social life is a major task, going out to do simple tasks are hard because I have to bring her with me, because when she is not with me, I still have to pump and trying to find a breast-pumping area, is even harder than finding a breastfeeding friendly area; when I talk to my peers who have infants the answer is unanimous, they all would rather have a bigger social life than have the responsibility of breastfeeding....which is wrong”.*

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- *“A baby who is breastfeeding holds you down and stops you from doing what you want to do. It is much easier with a bottle, I can give it to her and she’ll calm down”.*

The Role of Social Support with Adolescent Mother's Choice of Infant Feeding Choice

- Maternal Support
- Support from Nurses: Hospital and Public Health Nurse

Maternal Support

- *“ my mother had a lot of influence on me and she was really positive. She really wanted me to try, she couldn't get me as baby to breastfeed, but she did try. I tried to quit earlier than I did (breastfeeding) and she kept me going, at first, during the first few weeks, when I went to stay with her, she's get up and first thing in the morning she punch me in the arm and say right now...pump!*

Support from Nurses: Hospital

- *“ I would ring the nurses at 3 or 4 in the morning, and they’d come down and sit with me for over a hour until I calmed down. I was so overwhelmed, and I didn’t know if I could do it (breastfeed), but they’d calm me down and walk me through it”*

Support from Nurses: Public Health Nurses

- *“ The Public Health Nurse was the one who taught us about breastfeeding. She brought the plastic breast and everything, she said, yup it is going to suck, and yup, it is going to hurt, but guess what it is going to do good for your baby in the long run”.*

Dealing with Mixed Messages: Breastfeeding in a Bottle Feeding Culture

- Embarrassment of Breastfeeding in Public
- Breasts as Sexual Organs vs. Nurturing Organs
- Conflicted: Mixed Messages

Embarrassment of Breastfeeding in Public

- *“Breastfeeding in public is a huge turnoff, I didn’t want to sit there and breastfeed in public, and to each their own, if that is what you want to do, but it is kind of disturbing when you are in the Tim Horton’s or you walk by a window and you see someone sitting there breastfeeding”.*

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- *“I actually get the sense that I had to formula feed in order to feel accepted into society because I felt really uncomfortable breastfeeding in public because I’d get really mean looks, and people would whisper, OMG she’s doing it in public, and things like that. So, I’d pump off a bottle if I was going out because I really didn’t feel comfortable. I do now, but before it was really hard to find breastfriendly areas and as much as it’s in the media that we are a breastfriendly society, we are not! People stare constantly”.*

Breasts as Sexual Organs vs. Breasts as Nurturing Organs

- *“ One of my friends asked me about orgasms, and like how does your body know whether it is the baby or whether it is your boyfriend? I pretty much told her that she was crazy, because you are going to know the difference between the two”.*

Conflicted: Mixed Messages

- Messages from Society*
- Messages from Family & Friends*
- Messages from Physicians*

Messages from Society

- *“ It has to be publically correct, they need to have more signs up, if they are at a restaurant, and it is breastfeeding friendly, there needs to be a sign to say that this is a safe space to breastfeed”.*
- *“ In magazines, you will see a mom feeding her baby a bottle, you never see them breastfeeding, it is nowhere to be found. It is like anti-breastfeeding, honestly in all of the shows I have seen, they always got a bottle shoved down the babies throat, no matter what the show is, there is a bottle in the baby’s mouth”.*

Messages from Family & Friends

- *“ His family wanted me to bottlefeed, and my family told me to breastfeed, I had quite a complication there. His family wanted to be able to feed the baby. My parents never brought me up on bottlefeeding, my family and everyone supports breastfeeding. There is nobody in my family that didn't breastfeed that we know of, it's pretty much the way it is”.*

Messages from Physicians

- *“ Well my family doctor, is like in his 90’s, so he can’t deliver babies, or anything, so I knew that I had to switch doctors, so then I switched. The new doctor never really talked much about how I was going to feed my baby. I don’t really think that she even asked me”.*

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- *“ I actually learned a lot more on one stupid television show about breastfeeding, than I did from my doctor. My doctor was useless at the time, she didn't talk to me. I don't know why she would not have asked me about how I was going to feed my baby?”*

Research Conclusions

- ❑ All participants aspired to be a good mother however all were affected in some way whether they breastfed or not by the good mother vs. bad mother identity.
- ❑ Multiple challenges influenced the participants regarding initiation and duration of breastfeeding related to lifestyle restrictions and loss of freedom
- ❑ Social Support from their mothers and Hospital and Public Health Nurses
- ❑ Mixed messages is the norm from society and physicians.

Future Implications

- Nursing Practice
 - Partnership with Education System
 - Advocacy & Collaboration with Family Physicians
 - Baby-Friendly Initiative Designation in Hospital & Community Health Services

Future Implications

■ Nursing Research

- Adolescent mother's perspective on 'good mother' and meaning of infant feeding choice
- Bonding experience and infant feeding choice
- Impact of breastfeeding and lifestyle choices
- Impact of support on the adolescent mother's infant feeding experience
- Societal and public attitudes on adolescents and breastfeeding

Future Implications

- Nursing Education
 - Skills in building relationships and collaboration
 - Knowledge of adolescent growth and development, impact of pregnancy, motherhood and breastfeeding
 - Knowledge of Standards of Practice and Core Competencies

Questions?

Thank-You 😊

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