

# **“WIC Participants Share Their Perceptions of Provider Support”**

Author: Amy Kaplan RD, CLC,  
Co-Author: Tammy Lantz, RD, IBCLC

*Denver Health WIC*

**Contact: Amy Kaplan**

**Email: [amy.kaplan@dhha.org](mailto:amy.kaplan@dhha.org)**

Category: Breastfeeding

If you work in WIC, then you have heard at least one, if not 100 interesting stories from WIC, participants about what a provider told them to do or not do around breastfeeding. Anecdotally, the stories range from extremely supportive to not supportive, and the WIC participants' reports can often sound like the providers gave downright misinformation.

WIC always keeps in mind that what the participant is reporting is their perception of the information given; however, the reports can be disheartening due to non-evidence-based information being reported as given by providers. As WIC sets out to offer education to providers, this research will be able to provide providers with quantifiable and qualitative data on what messages WIC moms feel they are currently receiving around breastfeeding and why it is important for WIC and providers to align messages.

# WIC Participants Share Their Perceptions of Medical Provider Support of Breastfeeding

## Background:

WIC participants frequently report what advice their that medical providers' gave them about breastfeeding. The accounts vary widely from supportive to unsupportive. We set out to measure WIC participants' perceptions of:

- Their healthcare providers' prenatal breastfeeding education
  - Overall attitudes about breastfeeding
  - Support of breastfeeding once baby was born
- The long-term goal of this research is to share the findings with Denver-area medical providers in an effort strengthen breastfeeding support and show the importance of aligning key messages.

## Overview of Methods:

With the help a MPH student from the Colorado School of Public Health, we designed a 10-minute-long phone survey in English and Spanish.

- 150 WIC participants were randomly selected from the 2,798 WIC participants who were enrolled on the program in the breastfeeding or non-breastfeeding category.
- The sample consisted of 110 English speakers and 40 Spanish speakers.
- All 150 participants were called, and follow up phone calls were made three additional times to working numbers at varying times of the day if the participant was not initially reached.

We used the online survey tool, Surveygizmo, for survey administration, data collection, and data analytics.

## Results:

**52 surveys were completed** yielding a **35% response rate**; **65%** were completed in **English** and **35%** were completed in **Spanish**.

### Prenatally:

- **23%** of women stated that their **doctor/midwife never mentioned infant feeding decisions** during their prenatal visits.
- Of the **77%** of women who reported **providers discussing infant feeding decisions**: **88%** reported hearing about **breastfeeding**; **37%** reported hearing about **formula feeding**; **37%** reported hearing about **pumping breastmilk**; and **35%** reported hearing about **combining formula and breastfeeding**.
- **42%** of women reported being referred to a **breastfeeding class**.
- **27%** of women stated that they would have **liked more information on breastfeeding prenatally**.

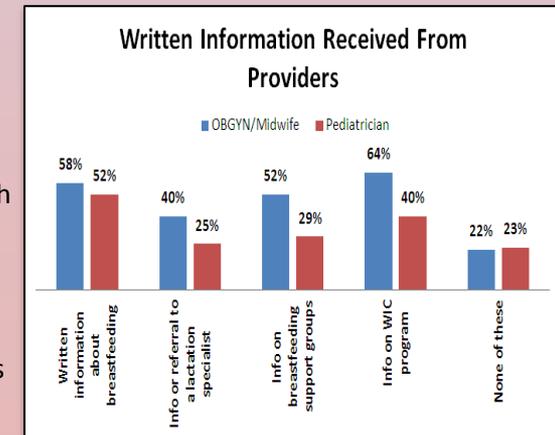
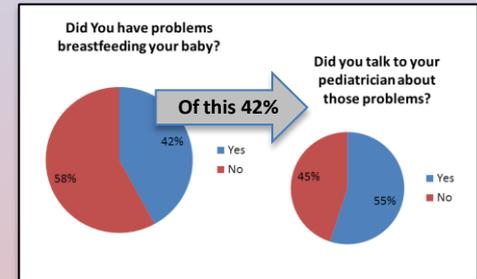
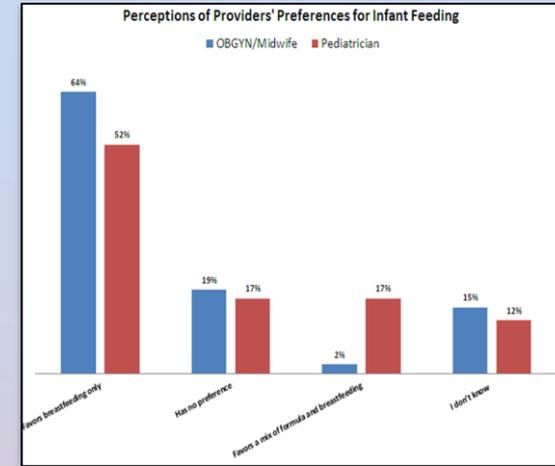
### Postpartum

- **31%** of participants stated that their **pediatrician recommended supplementing breastfeeding with formula**. **69%** of these women stated that the main reason the **pediatrician recommended formula** was due to **concerns about insufficient milk supply**.
- **14%** women reported that their **pediatrician gave them a sample of formula** at their visit.

## Discussion:

This project helped identify a need for provider outreach & education on:

- The impact provider support and promotion of breastfeeding can have
- How milk supply works
- Questions pediatricians can ask to determine if moms are experiencing breastfeeding difficulties
- How and where to make lactation referrals



Tammy Lantz, RD, IBCLC  
Tammy.lantz@dhha.org

Amy Kaplan, RD, CLC  
Amy.kaplan@dhha.org