

Duration and Exclusivity of Breastfeeding in Oklahoma

Breastfeeding, specifically exclusive breastfeeding, is known to provide immediate benefits to infants and mothers and long-term protection from chronic health problems that lead to morbidity and mortality. Infants with a family history of diabetes, who have been breastfed exclusively for at least four months, have a decreased risk of developing Type 1 Diabetes, and a decreased risk of developing asthma and eczema. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend exclusive breastfeeding for approximately the first six months of life.¹

Oklahoma Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) data in this Brief will focus only on mothers who initiated breastfeeding. Because new mothers are surveyed between 2-6 months postpartum, the longest duration that can be reasonably measured is nine weeks.

Figure 1 highlights the initiation and duration (at eight or more weeks) rates from 2004-2010. Although largely stable there does appear to be a slight upward trend in both initiation and duration at

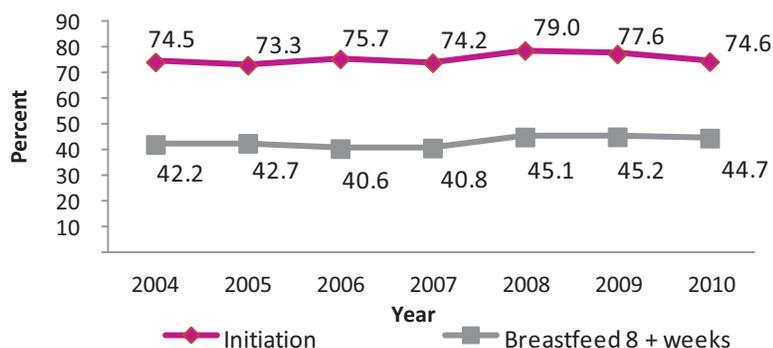
eight or more weeks after 2007. Changes in the survey occurred between 2008 and 2009, including minor changes to the initiation of breastfeeding question. Therefore, the remaining analysis will discuss only the 2009-2010 period, for continuity.

Data show 76.1% of new mothers initiated breastfeeding in 2009-2010. The Healthy People 2020 goal for breastfeeding initiation is 81.9%. Initiation and duration rates (to eight weeks or more) are available by maternal race in Figure 2. None of the identified groups met the Healthy People 2020 initiation goal.

Although initiation rates from 2009-2010 were high, the majority of infants who were breastfed were not breastfed to at least eight weeks (55.0%). Among those mothers who breastfed less than eight weeks:

- 61.2% were 20-29 years old
- 25.3% had less than a high school education
- 12.8% were American Indian
- 29.4% were obese (Body Mass In-

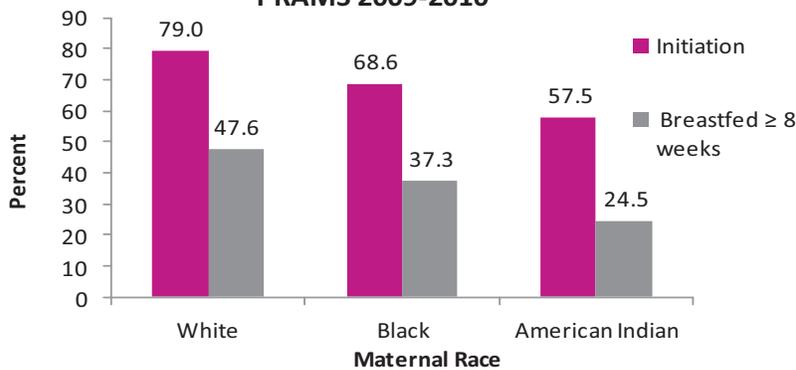
Figure 1: Trends in Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration of Eight Weeks or More, Oklahoma PRAMS 2004-2010



OKLAHOMA FACTS

- 76.1% of new mothers initiated breastfeeding in 2009-2010.
- More than half of breastfed infants in 2009-2010 were breastfed less than eight weeks (55.0%).
- 72.0% of mothers who breastfed for less than eight weeks utilized Medicaid/ SoonerCare for prenatal or delivery care.
- Almost 1/3 of breastfeeding mothers stopped exclusively breastfeeding their infants in the first week.
- Half of infants in Oklahoma were exclusively breastfed less than 3.8 weeks.
- 32.8% of infants were exclusively breastfed for 9 or more weeks.
- The three most commonly given reasons for stopping breastfeeding (and mothers could select more than one) were:
 - Not enough milk (51.0%)
 - Latching problems (27.3%)
 - Mother returned to work or school (17.9%)

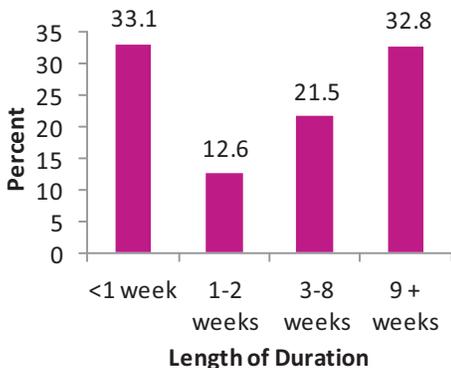
Figure 2: Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration of Eight Weeks or More by Maternal Race, Oklahoma PRAMS 2009-2010



- dex (BMI) of 30.0 or above)
- 72.0% utilized Medicaid/SoonerCare for prenatal or delivery care
- 29.8% had a household income of less than \$10,000 per year
- 53.3% were unmarried
- 18.6% reported symptoms of postpartum depression
- 69.6% had WIC during their pregnancy
- 63.8% lived in rural areas
- 7.2% did not have a well baby checkup within one week postpartum
- 14.5% did not receive counseling or advice from their prenatal care provider on breastfeeding

Because AAP and WHO recommend exclusive breastfeeding for at least 6 months, PRAMS data also were reviewed to look at duration and exclusivity to identify characteristics associated with exclusive breastfeeding.

Figure 3: Length in Weeks of Exclusive Breastfeeding Duration, Oklahoma PRAMS 2009-2010



The median duration for exclusive breastfeeding (defined as feeding the infant only breastmilk, no other liquids including water, formula, juice, etc.) was 3.8 weeks.

One-third of infants were breastfed exclusively for less than 7 days (33.1%, See Figure 3). However, 32.8% were exclusively breastfed for nine weeks or more (the longest duration PRAMS can measure due to sampling methods).

The most common reasons given for stopping breastfeeding among all mothers who attempted breastfeeding were (and mothers could choose more than one):

- Didn't have enough milk (51.0%)
- Baby had difficulty latching (27.3%)
- Mother went back to work or school (17.9%)
- It was too painful (14.1%)
- It was too time consuming (9.7%)

Eighteen percent of women wrote in comments about why they stopped breastfeeding; these included the infant's health status, other children in the household, the mother's health status, and personal preference, among others.

Reference:
1. American Academy of Pediatrics. *Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk*. *Pediatrics*. 129(3), March 2012.

"We have a great pediatrician and without her I would have given up breastfeeding."

- PRAMS Mom

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PRAMS is a population-based surveillance system about maternal behaviors and experiences before, during, and after pregnancy. Approximately 250 mothers are selected to participate in Oklahoma each month. Mothers are sent as many as three mail questionnaires seeking their participation with follow-up phone interviews for non-respondents. Information included in the birth registry is used to develop analysis weights that adjust for probability of selection and non-response. Prevalence rates were calculated and the potential risk factors were identified using the Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square (χ^2) Test. The sample size for 2009-2010 was 5,937 with a response rate of 68.7%.

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