Breastfeeding
Grand Rounds 2017

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Registered dietitians may go to the program webpage for their CE documentation.

The Impact of Social and Cultural Values and Strategies to Address Disparities in Breastfeeding Practice
August 3, 2017
Featured Speakers
- Naomi Bar-Yam, PhD, ACSW
  Mothers’ Milk Bank Northeast & Human Milk Bank Association of North America
- Ruth Lawrence, MD, DD (Hon), FABM, FAAP
  Distinguished Alumna Professor Pediatrics & Ob/Gyn, U of Rochester School of Medicine
- Kimberly Seals Allers, MS
  Journalist/Author, The Big Letdown and Director, The First Food Friendly Community Initiative (3FCI)

Conflict of Interest & Disclosure Statements
The planners and presenters do not have any financial arrangements or affiliations with any commercial entities whose products, research or services may be discussed in this activity.

No commercial funding has been accepted for this activity.

Thank You to Our Sponsors
- University at Albany School of Public Health
- New York State Department of Health, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
Learning Objectives

- Describe the disparities in breastfeeding rates in different populations of women in the US;
- Name at least three ways that cultural or social values have negatively impacted breastfeeding rates in the US;
- Identify at least three cultural or social values that strengthen or support breastfeeding mothers; and
- Name a strategy that has been successful in changing cultural norms to encourage or increase breastfeeding within a population of mothers in the US.

Breastfeeding History

Historically, for most people, breastfeeding was the way babies ate.

Forms of Milk Sharing

- Cross Nursing - Women nurse one another’s babies, usually occasional
- Wet Nursing - Nursing another baby for pay, usually persistent
- Nursing During Slavery - a slave nurses master’s baby, often exclusively
- Milk Kinship - kinship bonds formed through cross nursing
Cultural Nuances & Barriers

"On the one hand, wet nursing claimed the benefits of breastfeeding for the offspring of white masters while denying or limiting those health advantages to slave infants. On the other hand, wet nursing required slave mothers to transfer to white offspring the nurturing and affection they should have been able to allocate to their own children" - historian Wilma A. Dunaway in The African American Family in Slavery and Emancipation (Cambridge University Press)

Legacy of Slavery

Stephen V. Ash's A Year in the South: 1865
- Enslaved woman Matilda Hughes’ twins died
- She was unable to breastfeed them often enough

If enslaved women's children died of neglect, how must they have felt when asked to care for other children?

Perinatal Medicine

Pierre Budin (1846-1907), French obstetrician
- Created perinatal medicine
- Established the first clinics for nurslings
- Death rate was 288 per 1000 live births
- Wrote “The Nursling”
- Promoted breastfeeding
Modern Infant Feeding

Urbanization
- Migration to urban areas
- Urban infant mortality reached 20%

Medicalization
- 20% Infant mortality galvanized MDs: Pediatrics a specialty
- Formula created

Industrialization
- Mass production of effective breast milk and refrigeration
- Separation of milk producer, product and consumer

Vulnerability

- US infant mortality in 2015: 4.8%
- US Black infant mortality (IM) in 2015: 11.7% (CDC)
- Detroit Black IM rate: 13.3%
- Cleveland Black IM rate: 14.6%

US Healthy People 2020 Goals

- Breastfeeding initiation: ~ 80%
- Breastfeeding at 6 months: ~ 60%
- Breastfeeding at 12 months: ~ 35%
Infants Ever Breastfed by Race/Ethnicity

2011 Data from National Immunization Survey, CDC/NCIRD & NCHS

- 2020 Baseline year – 74.0% (2006)
- 2020 Target – 81.9%

Initiating Breastfeeding, 2004-2008

Breastfeeding Disparities
Key Dimensions of Culture

- Culture is learned
- Culture is shared - among and between groups
- Culture adapts and evolves
  - understanding change is intrinsic to understanding culture
- Culture is not monolithic
- Culture does not exist in a vacuum
  - Proximate cultures influence one another
  - History, politics, economics, physical environment, technology, science...all influence the expressions of culture

Awareness vs. Stereotyping

- Do not assume that all moms will believe and behave according to the most commonly held beliefs/behaviors of her culture, subculture, community or group.

Determinants of Health

- Factors that contribute to population and community health:
  - Biological factors
  - Individual behavioral
  - Social environment
  - Physical environment
  - Health services
- Health is influenced by the intersection of these factors
Health Equity

- Complex intersection of social structures and economic systems – political economy – that can reproduce and sustain health disparities and inequalities...or repair it
- Systemic racism and institutional racism
- Unequal distribution of power and wealth impacts patterns of health and access to health care resources

Breastfeeding Challenges

- Breastfeeding is invisible
- Mainstream US culture is embarrassed by breastfeeding
- Relatively little supportive government policies
- Society not protected and supported breastfeeding moms and babies wherever they are

Breastfeeding Stigmas

- Sexualization of the breast
- Eroticization of breastfeeding
- Belief formula equivalent to, or better than, breast milk
- Feminism and increased # of women in workforce
- Laws and policies that pose barriers to breastfeeding
- Media portrayal of breastfeeding as extreme parenting
- Idea that breast milk is a biohazard
Media Stereotypes

How Culture Shapes Practice

- New immigrants and 2nd generation conflicts
- Lack of multi-generational support
- Socio-economic privilege
- Desert-like conditions in communities

Aggressive Infant Formula Marketing

- Predatory marketing
- Global political economy reproduces health disparities and systems of oppression
- Formula feeding normalized worldwide
- As formula consumption increases, breastfeeding decreases, infant malnutrition and death rise
Strategies to Support Breastfeeding

- Baby Cafés and peer support
- Doulas and lactation consultants
- Education of fathers and families
- Community and faith-based education
- Educating on the health benefits of breast-feeding (breast cancer, obesity, diabetes, etc.)
- Policy actions

Strategies and Solutions

- Ask questions
- Find answers in the community
- Mothers need to be supported where they eat, work, play and worship
- Breastfeeding is economical & ecological
- Human milk is the first food!

Osborn Community Surveying Team
Osborn Team (cont)

Transforming the Landscape

How do we transform the landscape for black women?

We asked mothers, “What would make life less stressful for you?”

Transforming the Landscape

“Describe yourself as a father”
Lessons from Philadelphia

- First Food Friendly Community Initiative (3FCI)
- Cultural shifts begin in the community
- Focus on places moms frequent – bus stops, parks, laundromats…

Creating mechanisms and environment to leverage their knowledge, resilience, and ability to improve MCH in places they know best.
More Breastfeeding Role Models Needed

Cultivate True Allyship with People of Color
- Know when to lead and when to follow
- #NOMOTHERLEFTBEHIND
- Community breastfeeding coalitions
- Sharing and networking

Normalization via Policy - Examples in New York State
- Breastfeeding Friendly Hospitals and Practices
- Public breastfeeding laws
- Effective July 1, 2017, pasteurized donor human milk for inpatient use covered under Medicaid
- Paid Family leave in NYS starts January 1, 2018, phased in over 4 years
Providers and Normative Change

- WIC Exclusive BF Learning Community
- Breastfeeding Friendly Practice Designation
- Breastfeeding Quality Improvement in Hospitals

Be a champion – or a change agent – within your practice

Lessons

- Challenge your assumptions - rethinking what you think you know
- “What you think of someone will determine what you are willing to do for someone.”
  - “The experience of being interpreted is different from the experience of being understood.” — Kimberly Seals Allers
- Separate the ACT from the EXPERIENCE
- Tell The Truth

No Mother Left Behind

- Reducing racial disparities in breastfeeding rates
- Health equity and equitable access to breastfeeding support
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  Thank you!

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This Breastfeeding Grand Rounds is dedicated to the late Johnnie Mae Holt, who was the founder and director of the Durham Central City Café soup kitchen in Buffalo, NY. She participated in our piece on the Central City Baby Café.

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Let us know how you use Breastfeeding Grand Rounds!

We invite you to take a brief survey on our Public Health Live! page to let us know how you use this program.

  Thank you!