

Poster Number: W1

Title: Infant Feeding Practices of LGBTQ+ Families

Abstract

Authors:

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Background & Significance: Human milk is the optimal food for newborns, however, for parents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or other sexual and gender minority (LGBTQ+) providing one's own human milk may not be possible. Therefore, it is important to understand infant feeding practices of LGBTQ+ parents for nurse practitioners (NPs) to support these families.

Purpose/Aims: The purpose of this study was to describe infant feeding practices in LGBTQ+ families and to compare to heterosexual or cisgender families.

Methods: A secondary analysis of parents with an infant less than 12 months from the Household Pulse Survey (April-July 2024) was conducted. Demographic characteristics to include sexual orientation and gender identification were extracted. Infant feeding practices were classified as: 1) human milk only; 2) a mix of human milk and formula; or 3) formula only. Chi square test and multinomial regression were used in these analyses. The study was deemed exempt by the IRB.

Results: Data from 1,598 parents were analyzed, 7.6% identified as sexual minority and 1.4% as gender minority. There were no significant differences in feeding practices between cisgender and gender minority parents: human milk only 41.7% vs 47.8% ($p=0.71$), mixed feeding 25.0% vs 26.1% ($p=1.0$), formula only 33.3% vs 26.7% ($p=0.61$). Nor any significant differences in heterosexual parents compared to non-heterosexual parents: human milk only 42.3% vs 36.1% ($p=0.22$), mixed feeding 24.8% vs 27.1% ($p=0.66$), formula only 32.9% vs 36.9% ($p=0.43$). Results remained non-significant using regression models and controlling for covariates, along with analyses of men and women separately.

Discussion/conclusion: These data provide preliminary insight into infant feeding practices of LGBTQ+ parents demonstrating no differences from heterosexual or cisgender parents. NPs should continue to support human milk as the optimal choice for all families recognizing that for some LGBTQ+ parents this may only be possible through use of donor human milk, induced lactation, or chestfeeding.

Keywords: LGBTQ+ families, infant feeding practices, human milk, breastfeeding,

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