

*Public Health Reports*

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“A Closer Look at Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Breastfeeding”

Dr. Suzette Oyeku

*“In 2001, 69.5% of women in the U.S. breastfed and 46.3% of women exclusively breastfed their infants in the early postpartum period. In the same year, only 32% of mothers were still breastfeeding and 17.2% were exclusively breastfeeding at 6 months postpartum. In 2001, only 52.9% African American women breastfed their infants in the early postpartum period, compared with 73% of Hispanic mothers and 72% of white mothers. The proportion of African American mothers continuing to nurse 6 months after birth was only 22%, compared with 33% of Hispanic mothers and 34% of white mothers. These rates underscore a significant racial/ethnic disparity in breastfeeding rates.”*

Oyeku discusses that of all the factors influencing a woman’s decision to breastfeed, the two most critical sources of information are from healthcare providers and social supports (friends and family). Black women signing up for WIC during the time preceding her study were more likely to be advised to bottle-feed than their white counterparts because they were more likely to return to work sooner than non-black women and wouldn’t be working in situations suitable for pumping.

Link to study: [http://journals1.scholarsportal.info/details.xqy?uri=/00333549/v118i0004/377\\_aclardib.xml](http://journals1.scholarsportal.info/details.xqy?uri=/00333549/v118i0004/377_aclardib.xml)