THE ASSOCIATION OF HOSPITAL PRACTICES TO BREASTFEEDING BEHAVIORS IN SOUTH CAROLINA FROM 2013-2015: ANALYSIS OF THE PREGNANCY RISK ASSESSMENT MONITORING SYSTEM (PRAMS) MONITOR

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of this study was to determine whether hospital practices are associated with breastfeeding initiation and breastfeeding duration for ≥10 weeks.

Methods: We analyzed the 2013-2015 South Carolina Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) data. The population of interest was mothers who delivered a single live birth in the hospital. The infant was alive and living with the mother at the time of the survey. Chi-square and logistic regression were used to examine breastfeeding initiation and duration among all women who delivered in a hospital and those who stated that they initiated breastfeeding while in the hospital.

Results: Logistic regression was used to analyze hospital staff practices, categorized as the eight steps of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, to determine if they were significantly associated with mothers initiating breastfeeding in the hospital as well as the duration of breastfeeding after discharge. For breastfeeding initiation, the Steps were analyzed to determine if they were significantly associated with mothers’ breastfeeding initiation. In an analysis of the weighted model, six of the eight Steps were found to have a significant association with whether a mother initiated breastfeeding in the hospital. STEP 3 Provide information regarding breastfeeding benefits and management (OR 6.43, p =0.0011). STEP 4 Breastfeed within the first hour of birth, skin-to-skin contact (OR 28.12, p=<.0001). STEP 5 Hospital staff show mothers how to breastfeed, and how to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants (OR 4.31, p=0.0006). STEP 6 Staff did not give infants food or drink other than breast milk unless medically indicated (OR 4.91, p=<.0001). STEP 7 Hospital practiced rooming in which allows mothers and infants to remain together – 24 hours a day (OR 3.14, p=0.0057). STEP 8 Hospital staff encouraged breastfeeding on demand (OR 6.56, p=<.0001).

For breastfeeding duration, the Steps were analyzed to determine if they were significantly associated with mothers’ breastfeeding duration of ≥10 weeks. In an analysis of the weighted model, there were three (3) Steps significantly associated with breastfeeding duration of 10 weeks. The first one, STEP 5 Hospital staff show mothers how to breastfeed (OR 0.41, p=0. 0.0031). The second was STEP 6 Staff did not give infants food or drink other than breast...
milk unless medically indicated (OR 4.55, p=<0.0001). The third one was STEP 8 where hospital staff encouraged the mother to breastfeed on demand (OR 2.06, p=0.051).

**Conclusions:** Breastfeeding is the optimal feeding methods for infants. There are multiple health benefits for both mother and baby. Our finding suggests that if hospitals focus on policies that support the increase of hospital staff practices that are positively associated with mother’s breastfeeding initiation while she is in the hospital, breastfeeding rates in those hospitals could potentially increase. Hospitals that are not designated as baby-friendly but implement or continue practices that support/facilitate breastfeeding could potentially experience rates similar to those facilities deemed Baby-Friendly.

Hospital practices that were found to be significantly associated with breastfeeding initiation and duration were significant regardless of the mother’s race, marital status, education, poverty level, BMI, or mental health status. This suggests that if a hospital implements these practices, the mother’s demographics, do not have to be a focus of the policy when implementing these STEPS. However, cultural competency is important and should be included in their processes. These hospital practices should be performed consistently for all mothers who deliver in the hospital regardless of her characteristics.

**Keywords:** breastfeed, health behaviors, hospital practices, initiation, duration, health disparities, Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, PRAMS, South Carolina