

Psychological Factors Affecting Breastfeeding: An Exploratory Study among Breastfeeding Moms

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Abstract : Breastfeeding is a unique emotional bond between a mother and their offspring. Though breastfeeding may be natural, it is not something mothers are born with; some still struggle to breastfeed their babies. Various factors can influence the breastfeeding experience, such as the mode of delivery, the mother's health condition, proper latching, etc. In addition, psychological factors have been known to influence breastfeeding ability, duration, and milk supply. Some mothers struggle to breastfeed their babies because they perceive they have a low milk supply and or don't have the ability to breastfeed their babies. Most of these perceptions result either from their own past experience or from the 'comments' of their caregivers. So, it is of utmost essential to understand such psychological factors affecting breastfeeding so that necessary steps can be taken to educate breastfeeding mothers. The study explored the role of psychological factors that affect breastfeeding. Data were collected from fifteen breastfeeding mothers using a semi-structured interview schedule. A total of 10 questions were included in the interview schedule. Questions were sequenced in a funnel pattern, beginning with open-ended questions and then moving on to close-ended questions. Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis technique. This technique involves identifying the codes, generating themes, naming them, and finally reviewing them. Results indicated that breastfeeding self-efficacy perceived insufficient milk supply, and lack of knowledge were the psychological factors affecting breastfeeding. The results of this study can be used to help mothers who are struggling with breastfeeding by developing interventions aimed at improving breastfeeding self-efficacy.

Keywords : breastfeeding, breastfeeding self-efficacy, perceived insufficient milk supply, Thematic Analysis

Conference Title : ICWMH 2023 : International Conference on Women's Mental Health

Conference Location : Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Conference Dates : January 30-31, 2023