

## Womens' Attitudes and Behaviors towards Breastfeeding in Public

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**Abstract :** Aim: Breastfeeding is a special process for a mother and her baby, and it is the first feeding option for a baby. However, not every society approves of breastfeeding in public to the same degree. The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes and behaviors of women living in Türkiye toward breastfeeding in public. Materials and methods: This descriptive study was carried out in December 2023 with 515 women (N=515) who had babies aged 0-5 years and breastfed their babies. Based on the review of the literature, an online (Google Forms) data collection form consisting of 40 questions was created. While 13 of these questions were about sociodemographic and obstetric characteristics, 27 were about breastfeeding in public. It took each participant 5-7 minutes to respond to the data collection form by marking their choices on the form. The responses of the participants were analyzed using the R Core Team statistics program. Results: The mean age of the participants (N=515) was  $30.6 \pm 4.07$  (range: 20-44). According to their statements, 76.1% of the participants had undergraduate university degrees, and 77.1% of them had given vaginal birth in their last delivery. While 68.3% of the participants stated that they had heard about the concept of breastfeeding in public, 47.4% said they comfortably breastfed their babies in public, but 33.6% said they breastfed their babies for a shorter period than usual. It was determined that 40% of the participants were embarrassed about being seen by someone while breastfeeding their babies in public, 38.6% were afraid of men while breastfeeding, and 89.7% looked for a suitable place to breastfeed their babies. Among the participants, 93.6% stated that they covered their breasts with a cloth while breastfeeding, 49.5% thought a mother should breastfeed her baby in a place where she can be alone with her baby, and 29.1% thought a mother should breastfeed her baby in private. Conclusion: According to the results of the study, although most women had heard of the concept of breastfeeding in public, and some were comfortable breastfeeding in public, some breastfed their baby in public for a shorter period than usual, they covered their breasts with a cloth while breastfeeding their babies, they were embarrassed about being seen by someone while breastfeeding, and they were afraid of men while breastfeeding. Therefore, awareness should be raised about breastfeeding in public, and environments where mothers can conveniently breastfeed their babies should be created.

**Keywords :** breastfeeding in public, breastfeeding, breastfeeding attitudes, breastfeeding behaviors

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