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Breastfeeding and working full time Experiences of nurse mothers in Karachi, Pakistan

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BACKGROUND: Culture, beliefs and practices, mother's employment, and increasing modernization are linked to breastfeeding. In Pakistan, some false beliefs and practices interfere with breastfeeding even among nurses. This led to the development of this study with the focus on nurses' breastfeeding experiences since nurses constitute the major workforce in any health care setting and most importantly are in a position to influence breast feeding.

AIM: The objectives of this study are: (a) To explore the experiences of nurses who are working mothers and are breastfeeding. (b) To identify the underlying problems faced by the working mothers in relation to breastfeeding practices. (c) To develop possible recommendations in order to help nurse respondents to work more productively.

MATERIAL-METHOD: A descriptive phenomenology was used to describe the experiences of nurse mothers in Karachi, Pakistan, working full time and breastfeeding. Twelve mothers constitute the participants who were selected purposively in six hospitals in Karachi. Unstructured interviews and observations were used to gather data guided by Colaizzi's data analysis method.

RESULTS: Three themes emerged from the data: positive experiences, mediating health behavior, and negative experiences. The participants recommended setting up a day care center to address their breastfeeding problems.

CONCLUSIONS: Breastfeeding rises to the mothers both positive and negative experiences mediated by mothers' health behaviors. Mothers working full time and breastfeeding find their whole experience rewarding as well as challenging. Although they know the importance and value of breastfeeding, due to their working circumstance they are unable to do this task, thus they made recommendations through this study to stress their negative experiences.

KEY-WORDS: Breastfeeding, working full time, nurse mothers, experiences, Karachi, Pakistan

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