

Exclusive Breastfeeding at Six Months Postpartum in Low-Income Populations: A Literature Review

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INTRODUCTION

- Human milk is the optimal nutrition for infant health and survival (WHO, 2023)
- Babies fed human milk and breastfeeding persons have reduced risks of many acute and chronic diseases (ACOG, 2023; CDC 2023; WHO, 2023)

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

- Projected *Healthy People 2030* goal for exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) at six months 42.4% (HHS, 2020)
- Low-income populations enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) have low EBF rates at six months (19.9% \pm 1.9, 95% CI) (CDC, 2023)
- Low-income populations' EBF rates are also lower than those in the general US population at 25.6% (CDC, 2020)
- Approximately 17% of US children live in poverty and are vulnerable to higher incidences of chronic diseases (US Census Bureau, 2021)
- Research is critically needed to understand what factors affect a person's choice to EBF for at least six months postpartum

PURPOSE

- To learn factors related to EBF at six months in low-income populations



METHODS

- Searched CINAHL, PubMed, and Scopus
- Search terms: Breastfeed*, breastfed, exclusive, low socioeconomic, low-income, and six months
- Publication dates limited to the last five years
- Review conducted to identify the evidence that included: English language, primary studies, low-income, and factors related to EBF at six months in low-income populations

FINDINGS

- Seven studies met this review's inclusion criteria
- Factors positively related to EBF at six months in low-income populations:
 - Higher education
 - Healthcare professional support
 - Social support positive predictors for EBF at six months in low-income populations.
- Positive predictors for EBF at six months in low-income populations:
 - Older age
 - Lower BMI
 - Strong control beliefs
 - Peer counseling
- Factors impeding EBF rates at six months in low-income populations:
 - Negative influences by healthcare professionals
 - Lack of community-based programs and social support

CONCLUSION

- Low-income communities need more resources to support breastfeeding persons
- Healthcare professionals need proper education with support, promotion, and protection of breastfeeding
- Further research is needed to learn about factors and interventions supporting EBF at six months postpartum in low-income populations

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