

# Perception and Knowledge of Breastfeeding Among Mothers in an Urban Multiethnic Community Hospital

Gianna Suyunova MD<sup>1</sup>, Peter Barrale MA<sup>2</sup>, Kashif Iqbal MD<sup>1</sup>, Roman Babayev MD<sup>1</sup>, Lily Q Lew MD<sup>1</sup>, Lourdes Cohen MD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Pediatrics, Flushing Hospital Medical Center, Flushing, NY 11355 United States, <sup>2</sup>Ross University School of Medicine, Portsmouth, WI, Dominica

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding (BF) for the first six months of the baby's life and continued for one year or longer. Decision to BF is affected by cultural, religious and financial reasons. By understanding barriers, providing education and identifying misperceptions in our urban multicultural community, BF rates and BF extension rates can be addressed.

**Objective:** To explore perception and knowledge of BF in an urban multiethnic community hospital.

**Design/Methods:** Descriptive cross sectional study of BF at Flushing Hospital Medical Center from Sept to Nov 2018. Questionnaire in English, Spanish and Chinese were given to mothers in post-partum unit before discharge for voluntary completion. Questions included demographics (age, gravida, education level, marital status, occupation, average family income), five questions on knowledge and five questions on perception. Data were analyzed using percentages and compared.

**Results:** Of 128 completed surveys, 34% were Hispanic, 31% Asian, 12% Caucasian, 4% African American and 19% other. Maternal age was 20-30 years in 48%, 31-40 years in 48%, primigravida in 38%, married in 69% and employed in 49%. Average family income <\$40,000 was in 68%. Almost all received prenatal care (92%) and BF was discussed in prenatal visits in 89%. More mothers planned to BF and formula feed (64%) than exclusively BF (39%). Of BF mothers, 51% plan to BF for 6 months, 17% for one year and 23% for two years. Reasons for stopping BF were to return to school and work in 40%. Sources of information on BF included family (88%) and doctor/nurse (59%). Primary reason to use formula was to ensure weight gain in 56%. Awareness of lactation support group in 34% and specialist in 51%. Knowledge of benefits of BF (less infection) was known in 70%. Increase in breast size with BF was believed by 60% of mothers. Positive attitude toward BF was in 72% of fathers.

**Conclusions:** Majority of mothers received prenatal care, discussed BF throughout pregnancy, was aware of benefits and lactation specialist. More mothers plan to BF and formula feed than to exclusively BF. Most fathers have a positive attitude toward BF. Healthcare providers as primary source of information can improve and can affect BF rates and BF extension rates.

## INTRODUCTION

- Breastfeeding (BF) is the best source of nutrition for infants.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends BF for the first six months of the baby's life and extended for at least 12 months.
- Percentages of babies initiating BF and duration of BF have increased in the US despite reported differences between non-Hispanic black and white infants.<sup>5</sup>
- Factors influencing BF rates include employment, mass production of formula, altered perceptions, education gap and professional support.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Perception is a major determinant of BF and varies between cultures.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>
- Most mothers decide to BF before and early in pregnancy.<sup>1</sup>
- Decision to BF is affected by cultural, religious and financial reasons.
- By understanding barriers, providing education and identifying misperceptions in our urban multiethnic community, BF rates and BF extension rates can be addressed.

## OBJECTIVE

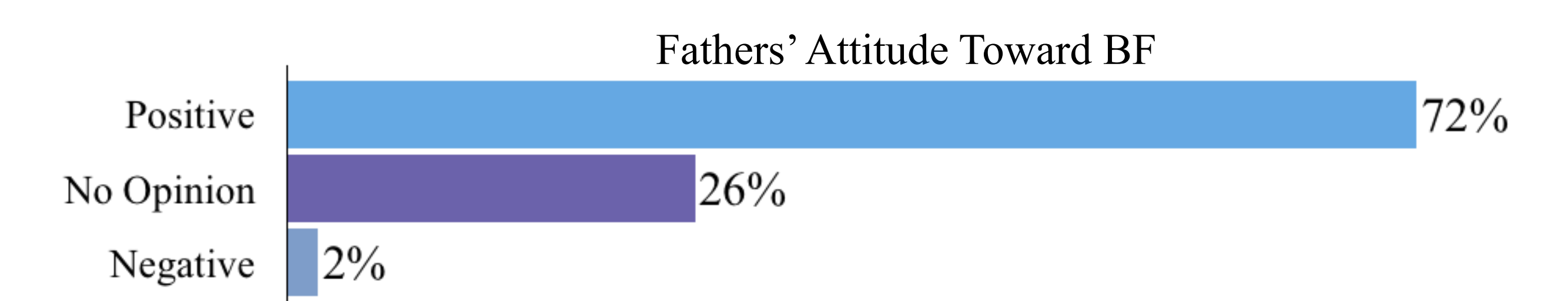
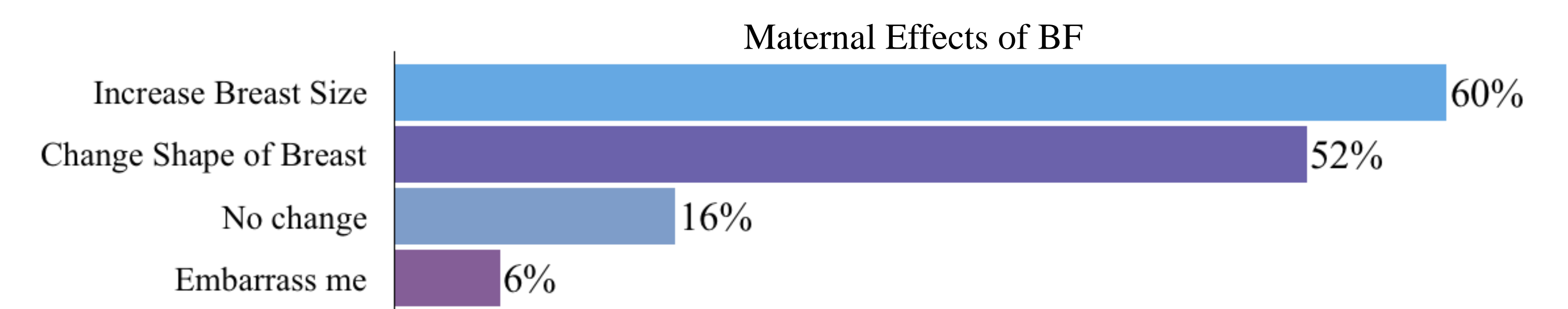
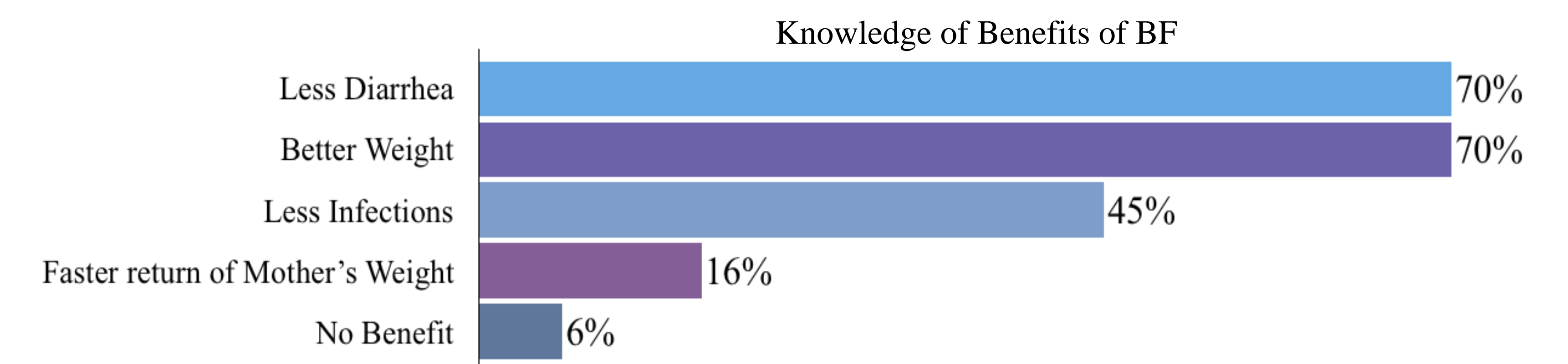
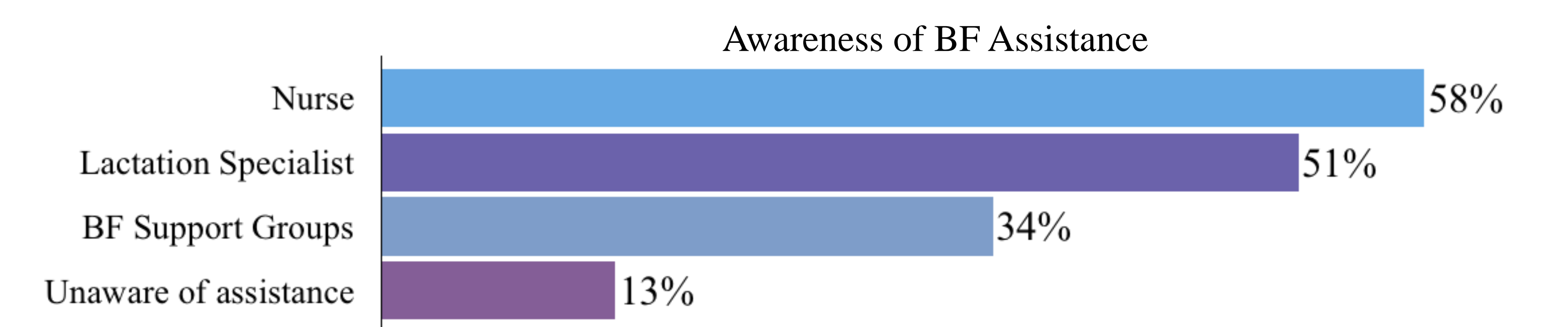
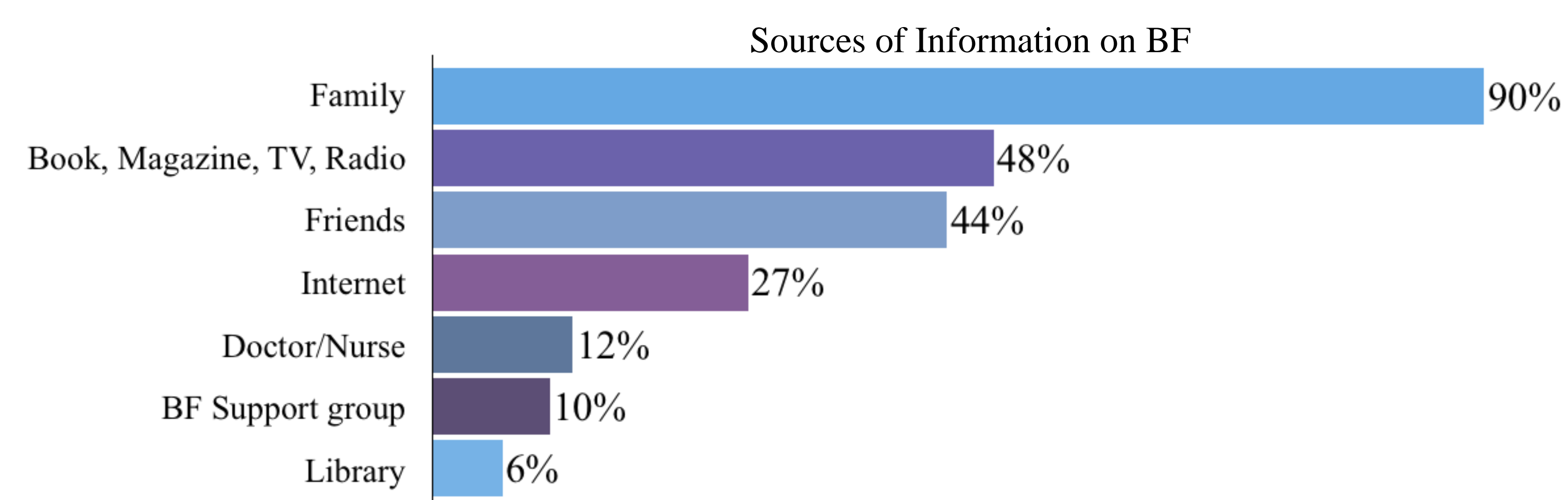
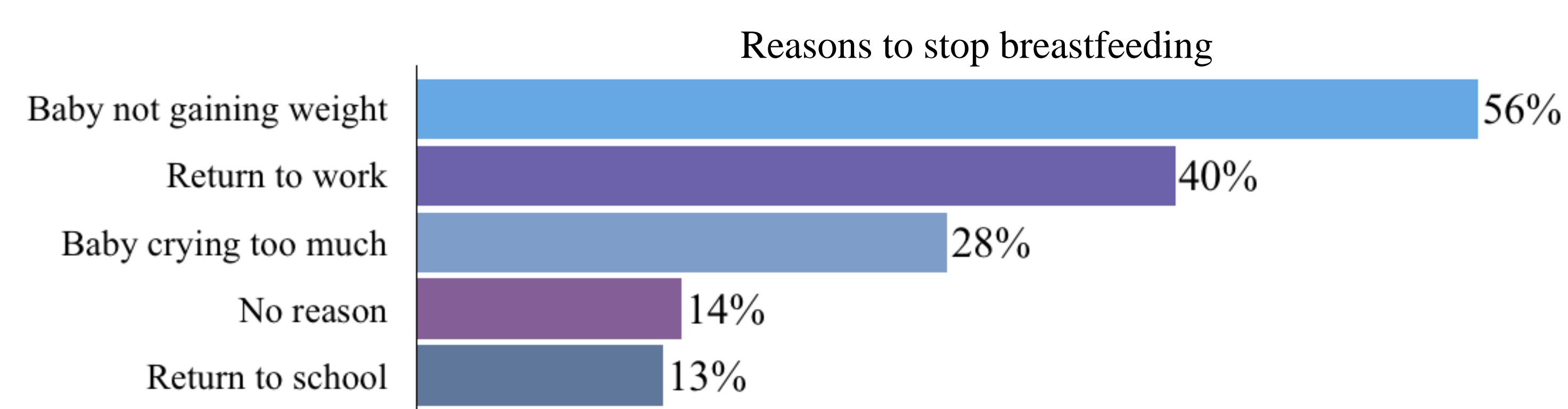
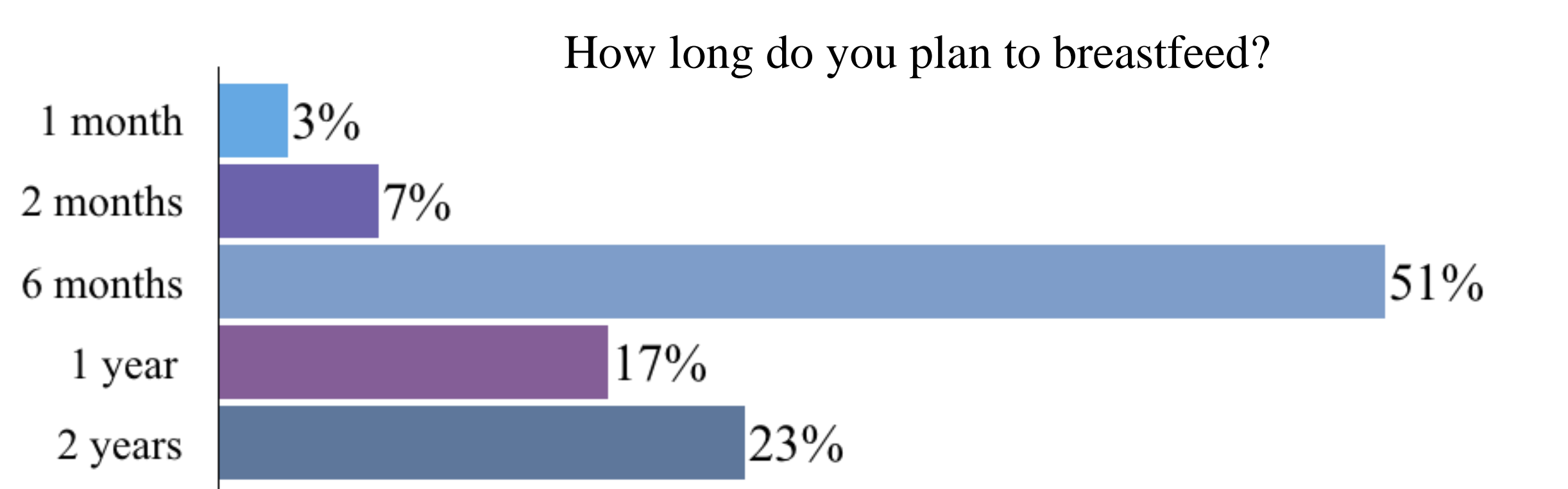
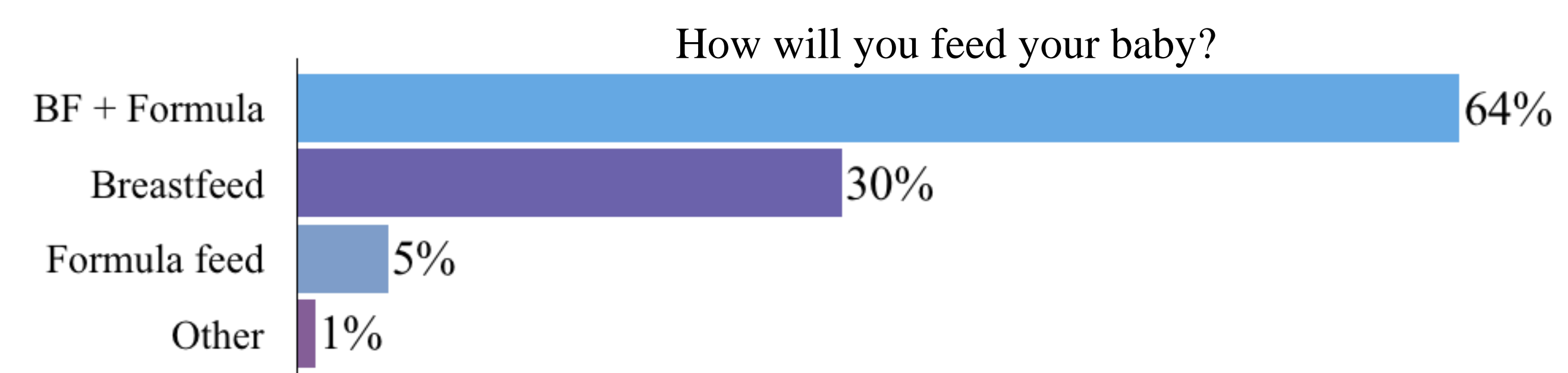
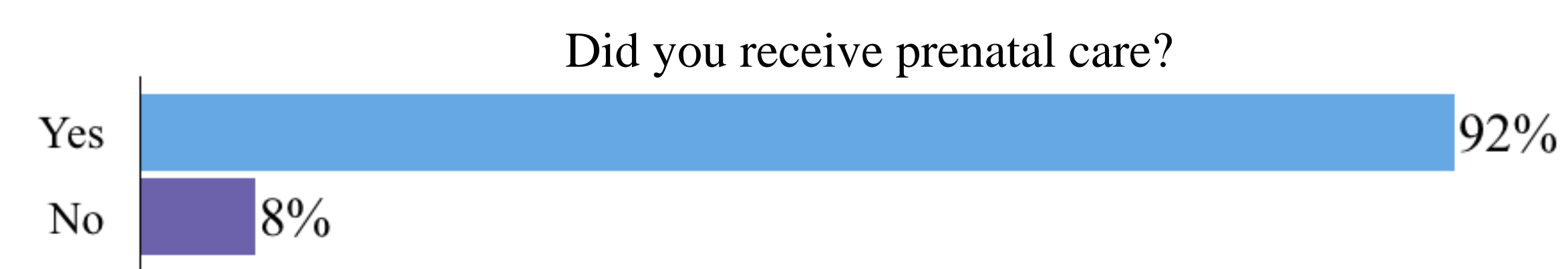
To explore perception and knowledge of breastfeeding in an urban multiethnic community hospital.

## METHODS

- Design:** Questionnaire
- Settings:** Flushing Hospital Medical Center
- IRB:** Approved by Flushing Hospital Medical Center
- Time Frame:** September 2018 – December 2018
- Inclusion criteria:** New mothers of healthy term newborns
- Exclusion criteria:** New mothers of neonates with gestational age less than 37 weeks, neonates admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), maternal medical conditions precluding BF
- Statistical analysis:** percentages for comparison

## RESULTS

- Completed surveys:** 128
- Demographics:**
  - Ethnicity: 34% Hispanic, 31% Asian, 12% Caucasian, 4% African American, 19% other
  - Maternal age: 20-30 years in 48%, 31-40 years in 48%
  - Gravida: primigravida 38%
  - Marital status: married 69%
  - Employed: 49%
  - Average family income: <\$40,000 68%
- Questionnaire:** knowledge and perception



## CONCLUSIONS

- Majority of mothers received prenatal care, discussed BF throughout pregnancy, was aware of benefits and lactation specialist.
- More mothers plan to BF and formula feed (mixed) than to exclusively BF.
- Most fathers have a positive attitude toward BF.
- Healthcare providers as primary source of information can improve and can affect BF rates and BF extension rates.

## REFERENCES

- Arora, S., McJunkin, J., Wehrer, J., & Kuhn, P. (2000). Major Factors Influencing Breastfeeding Rates: Mother's Perception of Father's Attitude and Milk Supply. *Pediatrics*.
- Kamath, S. P., Garg, D., Khan, M. K., Jain, A., & Baliga, B. S. (2016). Perceptions and Practices regarding Breastfeeding among Postnatal Women at a District Tertiary Referral Government Hospital in Southern India. *Scientifica*, 6 pages.
- Petit, A. I. (2008). Perception and Knowledge on Exclusive Breastfeeding among Women Attending Antenatal and Postnatal Clinics. A Study from Mbarara Hospital - Uganda. *Tanzania Medical Student' Association*, 27-30.
- Radwan PhD, H., & Sapsford PhD, R. (2016). Maternal Perceptions and Views About Breastfeeding Practices Among Emirati Mothers. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, 73-84.
- Anstey E. H PhD, Chen J, Elam-Evans L. D., Perrine C. G., Racial and Geographic Differences in Breastfeeding - United States, 2011-2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWC)* July 14, 2017. 66 (27); 723-727.