

PERCEPTION TOWARD BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT AT WORK: A COMPARISON BETWEEN CAREER WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS IN TRINIDAD

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Background: Returning to work becoming a major reason for the discontinuation of breastfeeding. There is a need for an intervention so that infants, mothers and society can reap the benefits of breastfeeding. Assessing the perception of female employees of child bearing age on breastfeeding support at work is imperative, so that services can be implemented at organizations to aid in extending breastfeeding. Unfortunately, there is no current information on perception toward breastfeeding support at the work by career women in Trinidad.

Objective: The purpose of this study was to evaluate and compare the perceptions held towards the provision of breastfeeding support at work by career women in the public and private sectors in Trinidad.

Design: A total of 400 female employees were sampled. Data were collected with the administration of a 16-item questionnaire to evaluate breastfeeding knowledge and perception towards breastfeeding support at work. The data were analyzed using SPSS v. 21.0. Descriptive statistics, the Independent T-test and Pearson's correlation was used for statistical analysis.

Results: Working women in Trinidad generally hold very positive perceptions toward breastfeeding support at work (48.1%, n=338). Breastfeeding knowledge and perception toward breastfeeding support at work was found to be positively related ($p= 0.001$). No significant difference in perception was found between women employed in the public and private sectors.

Conclusion: No significant difference with regard to perception and knowledge were found among the two groups. Breastfeeding knowledge was significantly, positively correlated with perception of breastfeeding support at work and education level. There was a positive correlation between education level and awareness of breastfeeding support at work.

