



## Exploring the Barriers to breast-feeding in obese women in a qualitative Approach

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**Background:** Obese women are less likely than normal weight women to initiate breast-feeding and are more likely to stop breast-feeding earlier. The present study was conducted to explore factors that influence breast-feeding practices in obese women.

**Aim:** To explore the factors that influence breast feeding practices in obese women. Specifically (a) to identify the barriers to breast-feeding and reasons for introducing formula and/or stopping breast-feeding, and (b) to explore the women's attitude and lived experiences of present breast-feeding social supports.

**Methodology:** A qualitative approach was used. Semi-structured interviews were chosen for this study. 32 obese women at 8-12 weeks following birth.

Interviews took place in a private room in health center (no:6) when participants were referred to check out their babies growth and development during 2014. Each interview was tape-recorded with the patients' permission and transcribed verbatim. The data were analysed using thematic analysis.

**Findings:** All the women in this study had a BMI between 30 and 46 kg/m<sup>2</sup> at the start of pregnancy. All the women confirmed that, at the time their babies were born, they intended to exclusively breast feed for at least 3 months. However, all had stopped breast-feeding or had introduced formula feeding. Three major themes emerged from the data analysis: the impact of birth way adversity, embarrassment and a lower social support for breast-feeding. Impact of birth way: Majority of women had given birth by caesarean caused to be deprived first hour initiation of breast feeding. Several women explained that they felt embarrassed to breast feed in front of others because of their obesity. Since the privacy was not availed in hospital, public even at home.

Some of the women revealed that they were confused regarding the physical size and were worried whether they can overcome to breast feeding with a huge breast. They were deprived to receive any practical support when they were struggling to overcome difficulties.



**Conclusion:** Midwives should be conscious of the presence of complications with maternity during post partum in obese women, such as caesarean delivery, physical and emotional difficulties. They should be aware that busy postnatal wards and missing privacy of the women, and a lack of confidence regarding milk supply would affect the breast feeding practice in this group.