Public Abstract
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Title: MATERNAL PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS RELATED TO DURATION AND EXCLUSIVITY OF BREASTFEEDING PRACTICES AMONG RURAL WOMEN: THE HEALTHY MOMS AND BABIES STUDY

Although many benefits of exclusive and long-term breastfeeding have been noted within research, rural populations continue to have rates that fall below the national goal for both exclusivity (25.5%) and duration (34.1%). Regardless, some women within this population are successful at breastfeeding both exclusively and for the recommended length of time. This study aimed at identifying pre-delivery psychosocial characteristics within a rural population that may be predictive of their breastfeeding exclusivity rates postpartum. A sample of 90 women in 27 rural counties completed instruments to measure self-esteem, breastfeeding self-confidence, partner/social support, depression, abuse and motivation during their third trimester of pregnancy and again around four months post-delivery. Mann-Whitney U, Fischer’s exact test and Chi Square were used for analysis. Previous demographic findings associated with exclusivity were not supported within this sample, with age, income and educational level approaching but not achieving significance. Antenatal measurements of breastfeeding self-confidence and motivation were significantly associated with breastfeeding exclusivity. Women who were more confident in their ability to breastfeed and were more motivated were more likely to exclusively breastfeed through three months. The findings of this study may assist in developing future nursing interventions to improve breastfeeding outcomes, as psychosocial characteristics are potentially modifiable.