“NOTHING CAN BREAK THE BOND…” DOCUMENT ANALYSIS OF THE BROWN MAMAS BREASTFEED BLOG PROJECT

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Presenter Disclosures

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The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose

Background

- Breastmilk is the optimal form of nutrition for infants. (WHO, 2003)
- African-Americans (Blacks) have the lowest breastfeeding rates. (US DHHS, 2011)
- Gaps in the literature regarding determinants contributing to this disparity.
- Few studies have examined the process or experience of breastfeeding in Black women. (Ma & Magnus, 2011)

Blogs

- New opportunities for health communication (Chou, 2009)
- “Enable “bottom up” as well as “top down” exchanges.” (Sweet & Simons, 2009)
- Being used to promote & support breastfeeding (West et al, 2011)

Purpose & Research Questions

- Purpose
  - To understand Black women’s experiences of breastfeeding using online documents.
- Research questions:
  - What lead Black women to the decision to breastfeed their children?
  - How do Black women describe their experiences of breastfeeding?

Data Collection

- Google Blog Search engine was used to search blog homepages with the keywords ‘black AND breastfeed’ in March 2012
- Limited to:
  - personal blogs with public access, featuring breastfeeding stories from multiple African-American women, which were posted since 2010
  - First 50 results were reviewed
  - Three blogs were selected
  - Two blogs included in this analysis
**Data Collection**

- **Brown Mamas Breastfeed Project**
  - Joint blog project across two selected blogs
  - Call for breastfeeding stories May 2011
    - Why did you choose to breastfeed?
    - How long did you breast feed?
    - What do you love about breastfeeding?
  - 23 breastfeeding stories extracted

**Data Analysis**

- Blog stories, including photographs, extracted
- Table constructed to organize stories in Microsoft Word
- Constant comparative approach used to code data, generate patterns and develop themes (Glauser & Strauss, 1967)
- Code mapping
- Member checking

**Findings**

- Factors in decision making
  - Attitudes, Knowledge and Beliefs, Health & Development, Cost & Convenience, Social Support
- Experience of breastfeeding
- Main themes:
  1. Child Health and Development
  2. Fulfilling Experience
  3. Importance of Social Support
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**Child Health & Development**

*“securing a healthy future for them”*

- Majority of women
- Most used the “best” in describing breastfeeding
  - “I loved...that I was giving her an advantage in terms of her mental and physical development.”
  - “I wanted to nourish my child with the best possible nutrients”

**Fulfilling Experience**

*“nurtured my patience and potential as a mom”*

- All women noted overall positive experiences
- Bonding major factor in breastfeeding decision
  - “I love breastfeeding because it is a beautiful experience...nothing can break the bond of a mother and child who breastfeed!”
  - “Bonding and intimacy. Love that he feels safe and secure when he is in my arms.”

**Importance of Social Support**

*“no one I knew had done it, and I got little support”*

- Mixed experiences
- Some indicated family history
- Health provider support post-partum was mixed
  - “I come from a breastfeeding family” and “both my mother and my aunt did... Even my father expected that I would breastfeed.
  - “Looking back on the situation, if only I had the medical advice and support I needed I would have nursed her well after 2 months.”

**Conclusion**

- African-American women are breastfeeding.
  - Child health & development and bonding are major factors
  - Social support is important yet often lacking.
  - Blogs are a feasible tool for breastfeeding promotion and social support.
  - Findings can aid in planning & implementing breastfeeding promotion programs.
  - More research is needed focusing on African-American women who are breastfeeding.