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**Title: Hong Kong Chinese women's perceptions of nursing support on initiation of breastfeeding**

**ABSTRACT**

Breastfeeding promotion campaign increased the public awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding. Despite the efforts and activities employed to promote breastfeeding, the breastfeeding rate was far from the target. As most of the Hong Kong women started breastfeeding in hospitals, nursing support might enhance positive breastfeeding experience and it was an influential factor in affecting mothers decision and duration of breastfeeding.

The purpose of the study was to explore the new mothers' perception on different types of nursing support. It also aimed to identify what kind of nursing support would be most helpful to the Hong Kong Chinese women in assisting them to cope with stress on initiation of breastfeeding. This was a quantitative, descriptive study in a non-experimental survey method. All data of the study were collected by self-reporting Chinese questionnaire through face-to-face interview. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data and find out the relationships between variables.

A convenience sample size of 50 primiparaes, within 24-48 hours after vaginal delivery of term and healthy babies, were surveyed in two postnatal wards of a regional hospital in Hong Kong. 12 out of 24 nursing support were rated as helpful and very helpful. Tangible supports were found to be the most helpful support. The Hong Kong Chinese women rated 'observed my process and told me my problem' and 'taught me the technique of breastfeeding' as the most helpful nursing supports. Correlation was found between 'encouraged my husband's involvement' and 'education level' (Pearson's  $r^2 = 0.440$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and 'length of staying in Hong Kong' (Pearson's  $r^2 = 0.537$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The findings revealed that the more well educated mothers, who had stayed longer in Hong Kong, would perceive their husbands' involvement to be more helpful on initiation of breastfeeding.

Based on the research findings, it is suggested that in order to cultivate the "Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative" among nurses in Hong Kong hospitals. Midwives should empower new mothers to have positive experience of breastfeeding. Sensitive and appropriate care to those new mothers was recommended. Hong Kong Chinese women requested to keep them informed about the progress and development of the technique of breastfeeding. The midwives should equip themselves to provide care for women of different needs. Husbands, mothers and mothers-in-law were also important sources of supports to the new mothers. The result of the study provided a comprehensive overview of nursing supports on initiation of breastfeeding. The findings would be useful for future planning for educational program that enriched nurses' knowledge and strategies in breastfeeding promotion.