

# Impact of Mothers' Breastfeeding Support Group on Promoting Breastfeeding

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## 1 Background

- Numerous benefits afforded to both mothers and babies in the short and long term from breastfeeding [1].
- US Healthy People 2020 goals still maintain the goal of increasing the proportion of infants who are breastfed[2].
- The CDC reported in 2016 that breastfeeding initiation rates within the US continue to rise [3]. However, by 6 months to a year, these numbers fall, indicating that mothers do not continue to breastfeed, perhaps due to a lack of support[3]. Therefore, it is critical to establish and support breastfeeding mothers early during the postpartum period[3].
- Group prenatal care has been shown to yield positive birth outcomes for both mother and baby[4]. It is important to determine if similar group support models could serve as an intervention to both increase breastfeeding rates and help mothers reach their goal of continued breastfeeding. This is especially promising because support groups can normalize the breastfeeding experience in a social context for mothers[5].

## 2 Objectives

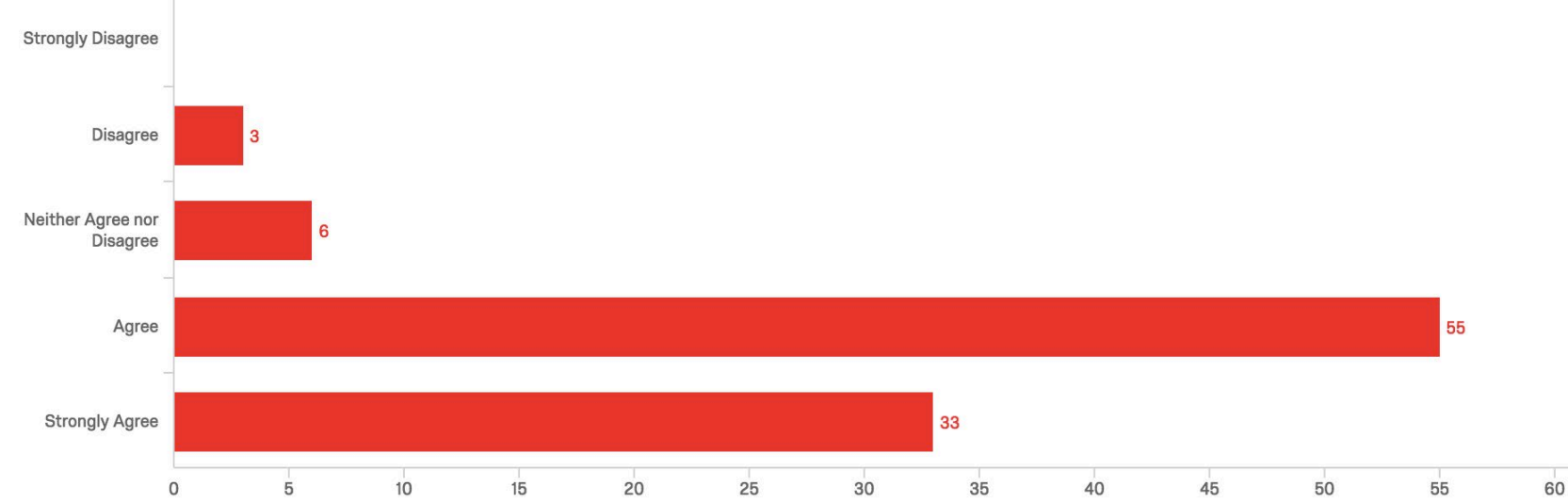
- To determine if breastfeeding support group model is more effective in helping mothers achieve their breastfeeding goals compared to one-on-one support.

## 3 Methods

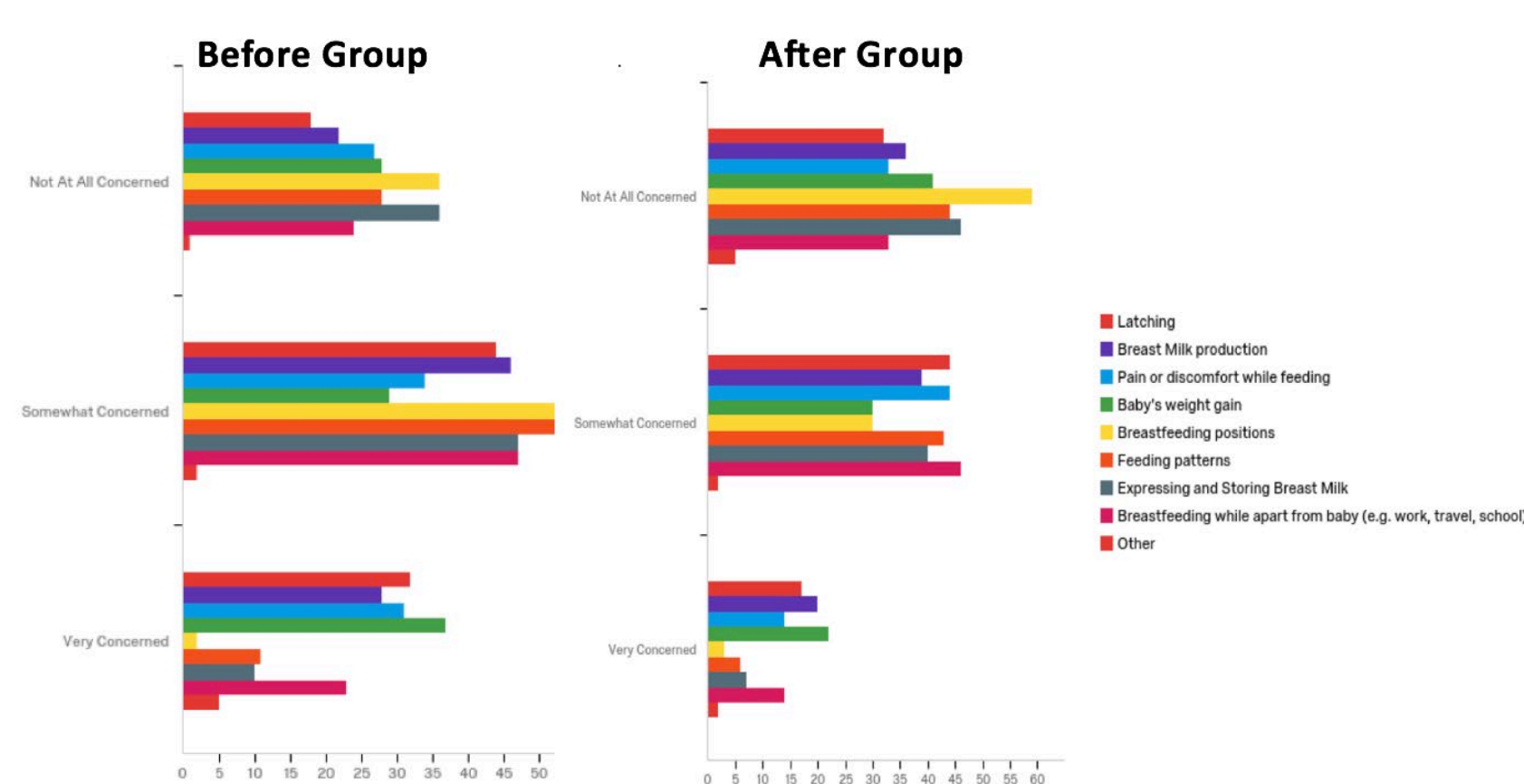
- Upon discharge, mothers at JHH were given information about the breastfeeding support group and invited to attend.
- Mothers who attended the hour long breastfeeding sessions received lactation support from a certified lactation consultant, in addition to an opportunity to interact with other breastfeeding mothers.
- Mothers who gave their email address received a Qualtrics survey that collected demographics and information about their experience.
- The mothers in the comparison group received one-to-one lactation support from the same lactation consultant during a pediatric visit. After their visit, they too received the online survey.

## 4 Results

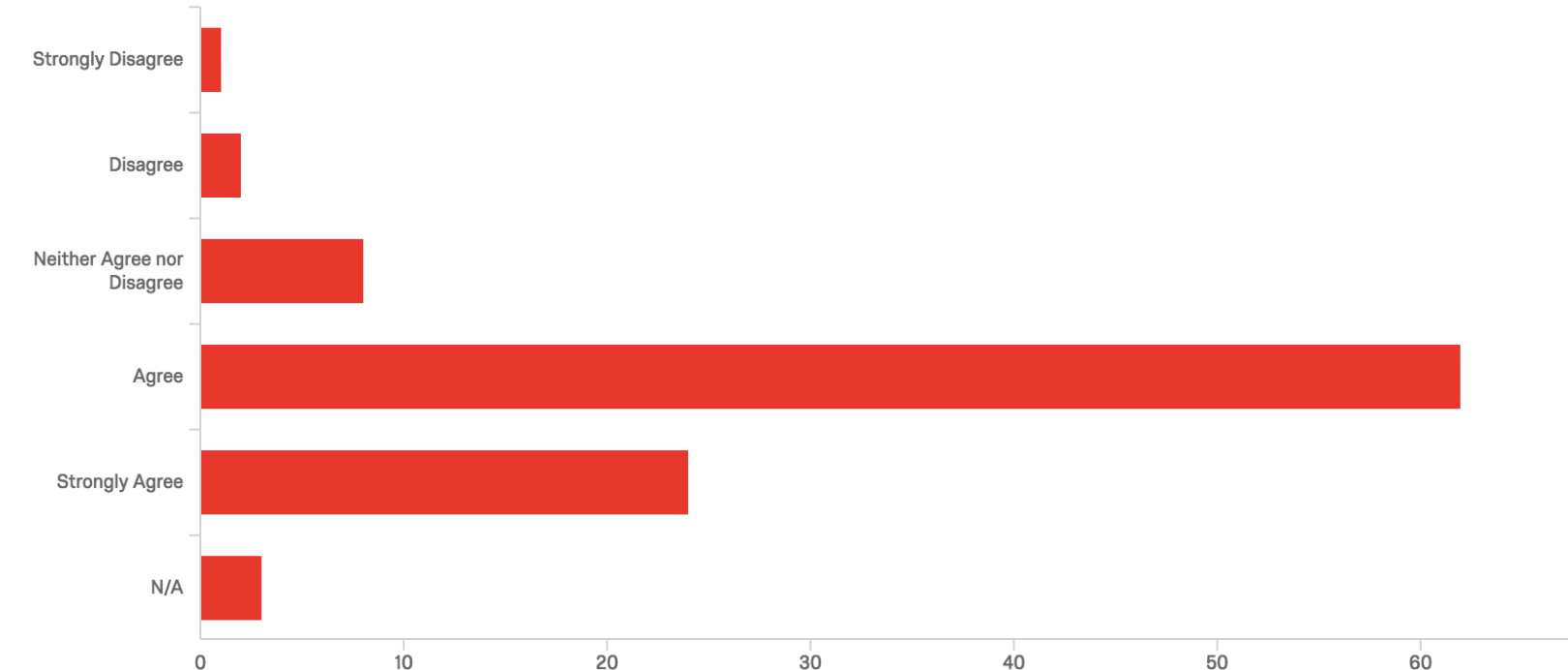
**Group session/lactation consultation helped me to meet my current breastfeeding goals. N=97**



**Level of concern for each common question about breastfeeding**



**I connect with other participants and/or feel supported by them during group sessions. N=97**



### Demographics

- 96% of mothers were between the ages of 25-44
- 75% identified as White, 19% Asian and 5% Black
- Majority of the mothers were well educated with 27% Bachelors, 31% Masters, 17% doctoral degree and 19% JD or MD doctoral degree
- 48% employed in the healthcare field
- 86% first-time mothers
- Nature of births was 65% SVD and 35% C-sec with 88% of the mothers going home with their baby upon discharge.

### Analysis

- Top concerns (baby's weight gain, latch, milk production and pain/discomfort when feeding) were decreased overall for each category after support group session.

- Over 90% of mothers strongly agreed or agreed that: discussion and feedback during sessions was applicable; their questions were addressed; they felt supported by the lactation consultant; they learned something that would help them achieve their goals; they connected with other participants and they felt supported by the others during sessions
- Over half of the mothers neither agreed nor disagreed on whether they would prefer one-on-one sessions. A greater sampling of the comparison group will help to clarify this difference.
- 88% of mothers responded that the session helped them to meet their current breastfeeding goals and 93% of mothers would recommend the group sessions to others.

## Conclusions

- The demographics draw attention to limitations in the population sample.
- Breastfeeding group support model is hopeful as an intervention to help mothers reach their breastfeeding goals.

## 6 Future Directions

- Expand breastfeeding support group model to other hospitals, clinics and offices to ensure that women can access these services.
- Determine barriers hindering specific groups from participating in breastfeeding support groups.
- Collect additional data on study comparison group.

## 7 References

See Reference list handout

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