

ABSTRACT

PHYSICIANS' BASIC KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, EXPERIENCE, AND TRAINING IN BREASTFEEDING

The decision of a mother to breastfeed her infant and her success in doing so are greatly influenced by the encouragement and help of her healthcare providers. This study investigated the ability of physicians in pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, and family medicine to promote breastfeeding. The data were obtained through questionnaires given to practicing physicians in California's Central San Joaquin Valley (Fresno, Kings, Madera, and Tulare Counties) within the specialties of family practice, obstetrics/gynecology, and pediatrics. Ninety participants were surveyed regarding their attitudes, knowledge, training, and experience in breastfeeding. Differences in the recommendation of breastfeeding were identified according to the participant's specialty and gender. Although a high percentage of the respondents have provided breastfeeding counseling, 23.1% of family practice and 13.0% of pediatricians reported never have counseled an expectant mother. Similar differences were found according to the participant's gender. More than 30% of the participants in this study reported having inadequate preparation during their residency training.

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