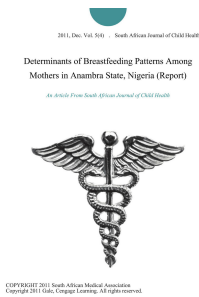


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## DETERMINANTS OF BREASTFEEDING PATTERNS AMONG MOTHERS IN ANAMBRA STATE NIGERIA REPORT EBOOKS 2019



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Adequate nutrition in the early years of life is necessary for children to grow and develop to their full potential. (1) The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) as the optimal feeding method for the first 6 months. This provides valuable benefits to the infants as well as to mothers and the nation as a whole. (2,3) It has also resulted in an overall decrease in infant morbidity and hospitalisation rates. (4) However, statistics indicate that most mothers do not practise optimal breastfeeding, and EBF for the first 6 months of age is a rare practice in a number of countries. (4,5) Early introduction of mixed feeding is still very common. Poor breastfeeding practices are a major cause of neonatal and infant mortality. In Nigeria, 52% of childhood deaths are attributed to the effect of malnutrition on disease. (6) Similarly, 21% of infant deaths in the country result from poor breastfeeding practices. (7) Although breastfeeding is universal in the country, the trend is towards giving other feeds in addition to breastmilk. (8-10) Reports show that the rate of EBF in the first 6 months of life is as low as 17%. (7,11) This has been attributed to several socio-economic and cultural factors. (12,13) However, these factors are still not adequately defined. In Anambra State, the prevalence of HIV is high (4.1%) compared with the national prevalence of 3.1%. (14) To the best of our knowledge, no similar study on determinants of breastfeeding has been carried out in the state. To promote and support EBF, there is a need to identify the factors that influence mothers' decisions on breastfeeding. The findings of this study will help in designing appropriate interventions to overcome the barriers to EBF for the first 6 months.

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