

Breastfeeding Experiences in First-Time Mothers after Assisted Conception

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Abstract

Objective: The association between assisted conception and breastfeeding outcomes has been investigated, but the women's experiences have not been fully explored. This study aimed to describe and understand the breastfeeding experience of first-time mothers who conceived using assisted reproductive treatment. **Methods:** A qualitative study based on Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology was conducted with a sample of 27 women who conceived using assisted reproductive treatment during the last 10 years. Focus group and in-depth interviews were conducted using a semistructured interview guide. The interviews' transcriptions were coded and categorized into themes and subthemes. **Results:** Two main themes emerged from the data analysis: (1) "the transition from infertility to motherhood," with the subthemes "infertility and decision to breastfeed," "the impact of birth experience on breastfeeding," and "hospital factors influencing breastfeeding practice"; and (2) "the reality of becoming a breastfeeding mother after assisted reproductive technology," with the subthemes "I want to breastfeed my infant," "the need for supports from others," and "when breastfeeding lasts longer than expected." **Conclusion:** Women who conceive by using assisted reproductive treatment experience a strong desire to breastfeed and problems such as low milk supply. Early cessation of breastfeeding provokes feelings of guilt and failure as mothers. Positive family networks and professional assistance are necessary to support breastfeeding.

Author keywords

assisted reproductive technology

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