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**EXPLORING PROFESSIONAL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT FOR  
BREASTFEEDING PRACTICES IN THE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE  
CENTERS IN QATAR: A MIXED-METHOD STUDY****Abstract:**

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended as the optimal way to feed infants during the first months of infancy. Despite this fact, a UNICEF report shows that only 12% of mothers in the state of Qatar exclusively breastfed their babies during 6 months after birth. This study is a follow up to a previous qualitative study Contextual factors influencing breastfeeding practices in Qatar that was conducted in 2010. One of the findings of the study, which was repeatedly suggested by the participants, was that both the hospital sector and primary health care services should be actively providing support to mothers to improve the breastfeeding practices in Qatar. Objectives: 1) gain insight on the existing support systems that are available to breastfeeding mothers the primary health care centers in Qatar (2) explore the breastfeeding promotion initiatives to improve breastfeeding practices among women in Qatar (3) identify the culturally appropriate ways of implementing the required initiatives from the health care providers' perspective 4) determine the percentage of mothers who received breastfeeding counseling in a limited period of time and if they find counseling influential and effective. Methods: A mixed-method design has been chosen to address the above questions. The study consists of two major sections: a qualitative and a quantitative part. For the qualitative part, 30 doctors and nurses of the prenatal and post partum clinics have been interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. For the quantitative portion of the study, a survey questionnaire was provided to 700 mothers who visit the primary health care centers during prenatal and postnatal visits. Result: This is an ongoing study and the results will be finalized by March 2014. Linking research findings to policy-making, service delivery, and practice are important dimensions of this project.

**Keywords:**

Breastfeeding Practices, Primary Health Care Centers