

Maternal Religious Involvement and Breastfeeding

- Although religious involvement is associated with a number of beneficial health outcomes, few studies have investigated whether religious involvement is associated with breastfeeding behaviors.
- Our analyses of two waves of data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (n = 4,166) indicate that mothers who frequently attend religious services are more likely to initiate breastfeeding than mothers who never attend services.
- Understanding religious variations in breastfeeding may allow public health officials to more effectively target vulnerable populations.

Table 1: Demographic and Descriptive Statistics(N=4,166)

	Mean or % (SD)
Ever breastfed	56.94
Breastfed 6 months or longer ^a	36.41
Religious Affiliation	
No Religion	11.05
Mainline Protestant	5.36
Catholic	29.03
Muslim	1.35
Baptist	26.46
Other Conservative Protestant	4.61
Other Christian	15.76
Other Non-Christian Religion	6.38
Attendance	
Never	14.54
Less than a few times a year	25.77
A few times a year	21.2
A few times a month	16.43
Once a week or more	22.07

Table 2: Odds ratios for Logistic Regression of Breast Feeding Behaviors on Religious Involvement and Background Factors

	Ever Breastfed (N=4,166)			Breastfed 6 months or more (N=2,374)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Religious Affiliation						
Mainline Protestant	1.178		1.056	0.869		0.832
Catholic	0.911		0.803	1.111		1.028
Muslim	2.677 **		2.382 *	1.925 +		1.791
Baptist	1.135		1.013	0.921		0.861
Other Conservative Protestant	1.846 **		1.600 *	0.965		0.856
Other Christian	1.348 *		1.164	0.975		0.895
Other Non-Christian Religion	1.693 **		1.431 +	0.926		0.854
Church Attendance						
Less than a few times a year		0.985	0.985		0.995	1.029
A few times a year		1.247 +	1.218		0.968	1.003
A few times a month		1.347 *	1.346 *		1.025	1.063
Once a week or more		1.554 ***	1.485 **		1.314 +	1.362 +

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