Lactation ordinance: How San Francisco needs to address its marginalized communities for healthier outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Many women are employed to provide for their families. It is difficult to stay employed, however, when new mothers need to lactate and do not have the space- nor the time off- in order to do so. And, because many small business employers cannot afford to lose their employees, they struggle to allow for them to take time off for their children.

Purpose: This study aimed to understand the attitudes and knowledge of lactation policy in smaller businesses across San Francisco in order to create a toolkit to demonstrate healthy lactation. **Methodology:** An online survey was conducted among 102 small business owners across San Francisco neighborhoods between September 2018-December 2018. It provided open questions on lactation practice and breastfeeding attitudes and the reactions assessed the influence of employer support in the decision to promote breastfeeding in the workforce. All data has been recorded on Excel. The data is especially important for toolkit completion/implementation by the end of 2020.

Results: Of the participants, more than half claimed to be unaware of lactation policy, especially in lower income neighborhoods. In comparison, data from higher income neighborhoods showed more support, which was expected given they had more resources available. The SFDPH is trying to implement a toolkit based on the collective responses of employers which target their overall needs for better lactation practice. This toolkit involves interactive media guides and information for healthy breastfeeding.

Recommendations/Conclusion: The best way for toolkit implementation to be effective is through even distribution between the lower income neighborhoods, as they have more trouble with access and proper benefits for lactating mothers. Currently, the SFDPH is expanding to outreach to more of these communities.

Keywords: maternal health, public health education, policy

Theme: Innovation of Healthcare



Biography:

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Since joining UCSF, Verma has been involved with approving consent of biospecimens of patients. Before joining, Verma worked with the San Francisco Department of Public Health on attitudes of breastfeeding within small businesses in terms of lactation ordinance. This project's data is now part of San Francisco City's lactation education policy through the Maternal and Adolescent Health section of the SFDPH.

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