

## Breastfeeding among U.S. Latinas: Subgroup Analysis of the National Immunization Survey

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In 2011, the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Regina Benjamin, released the *Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding (Call to Action)*. The *Call to Action* documents the positive maternal and infant health impacts associated with breastfeeding, and recommends a series of steps aimed at increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration in the United States. While Latino women currently have the highest breastfeeding initiation and duration rates in the United States, little investigation has been conducted to understand differences in breastfeeding practices among Latina subgroups.

Using secondary data from the National Immunization Survey 2011-2013, this study sought to:

1. To examine differences in breastfeeding behaviors (initiation and optimal breastfeeding) among U.S. Latino women subgroups using a national sample.
2. To explore the intervening factors associated (acculturation, education, income and WIC participation) with breastfeeding behaviors (initiation and optimal breastfeeding) among U.S. Latino women.
3. To develop a plan to inform public health policy makers and advocates on U.S. Latino breastfeeding behavior and its implications.

With regards to those who had ever breastfed, the overall analysis found: for Latina mothers, WIC was associated with less breastfeeding; speaking English was associated with less breastfeeding than speaking Spanish; and higher education was associated with a greater likelihood of breastfeeding when all other variables were controlled. Non-Hispanic/Latina mothers were less likely to breastfeed than all other groups except Puerto Rican mothers. Mexicano mothers were more likely to breastfeed than Mexican American or Puerto Rican mothers. Puerto Rican mothers were less likely to breastfeed than Central American, South American, and Spanish Caribbean mothers.

With regards to optimal breastfeeding, the overall analysis found: WIC usage is associated with less likelihood of optimal breastfeeding, while greater income was associated with a higher likelihood of optimal breastfeeding. Looking at pairwise differences between levels of Hispanic origin, only two differences was statistically significant, indicating that Non-Hispanic/Latina mothers were more likely to optimally breastfeed than Puerto Rican and Mexican American mothers.