

International Conference on  
**Advanced Nursing & Neonatal Nursing**

September 10-11, 2019 | Prague, Czech Republic

### **Breastfeeding practices and social support among mothers in District V, Manila**

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In the Philippines, exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) remains stagnant with only half of all the neonates being exclusively breastfed (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2013). This research aims to: describe current breastfeeding practices of mothers with young infants; determine knowledge of mothers on breastfeeding; determine the level of social support that mothers receive; determine factors affecting current practice in terms of breastfeeding knowledge and social support; determine factors affecting intention to continue breastfeeding in terms of current practice and social support. Women 18-50 years with infants one-six months as well as other adult family members were given self-administered questionnaires to answer. The study was done at five selected health centers in District V, Manila. Results of the study showed that EBF rates (32%) are still low and not at par with WHO target of increasing exclusive breastfeeding among infants younger than six months to 50% by the year 2025. Knowledge of mothers on breastfeeding was found to be suboptimal. Social support was found to be high for all mothers, with highest reported support from the health care providers. However, among the three sources of support, only with the husbands was there enough evidence to suggest a relationship between current breastfeeding practices and social support. Despite the high social support provided by the husbands, there were more mothers who did not practice exclusive breastfeeding, which may be attributed to negative support. Social support was also found to influence maternal intention to breastfeed exclusively for six months and continue breastfeeding up to two years. Since support has been shown to have a relationship with breastfeeding practice and intention, active involvement of husbands and other family members in the breastfeeding interventions during the antenatal and postnatal period should be encouraged.