A close-up photograph of a woman with long brown hair breastfeeding her baby. The woman is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. The baby is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt with small blue stars and a yellow beaded bracelet on its right wrist. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white fabric.

Breastfeeding Practices of the

Vietnamese Community

San Diego County

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Demographic Profile

Vietnamese Population in San Diego County



- ❖ Vietnamese population makes up ~13% of API population in Mid-City region of San Diego County
- ❖ Third-largest ethnic group in SD County

POPULATION SIZE



- ❖ Little Saigon is located along El Cajon Blvd & University Ave in City Heights
- ❖ Recognized in 2013
- ❖ Vietnamese population makes up ~45% there

LOCATION



- ❖ Primarily Vietnamese and English, some Cantonese and French
- ❖ ~83% Vietnamese Americans are bilingual English & Vietnamese

LANGUAGES



- ❖ 75.7% of Asian Americans exclusively breastfeed in San Diego County
- ❖ In Vietnam, exclusive breastfeeding rates rose from 17% in 2010 to 24.3% in 2014

MORE DEMOGRAPHICS





Current Trends & Practices

Breastfeeding in the Vietnamese Community



Variations in Feeding Practices

- ❖ “Hot”/”Cold” states in mothers fare for specific diets during breastfeeding



- Replenishment
- Maintains breast milk production



- ❖ Negative perception of colostrum
 - Stigma of “dirty” milk
 - Perceived as not nutritious & discarded

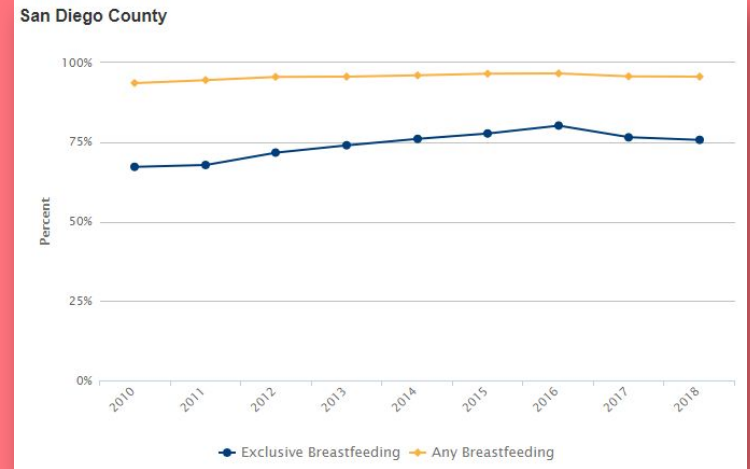
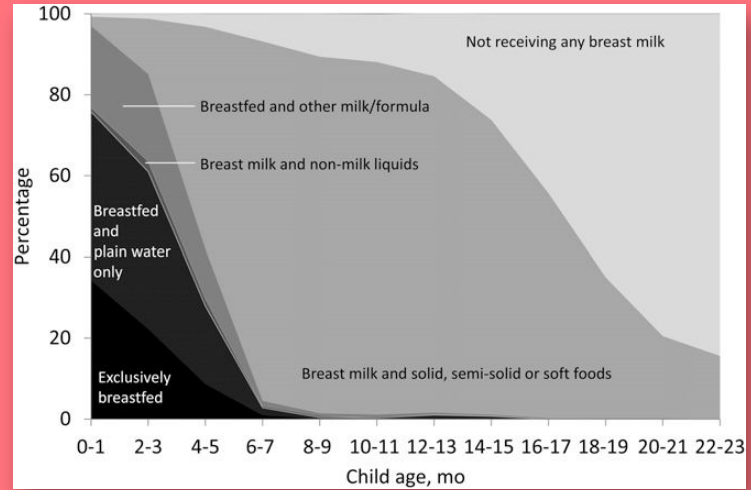


- ❖ Prelacteal feeding practices
 - Vietnam: Sugar/honey or herbal teas mixture
 - California: (Pre-chewed) Rice paste or porridge



Attitudes Towards Breastfeeding

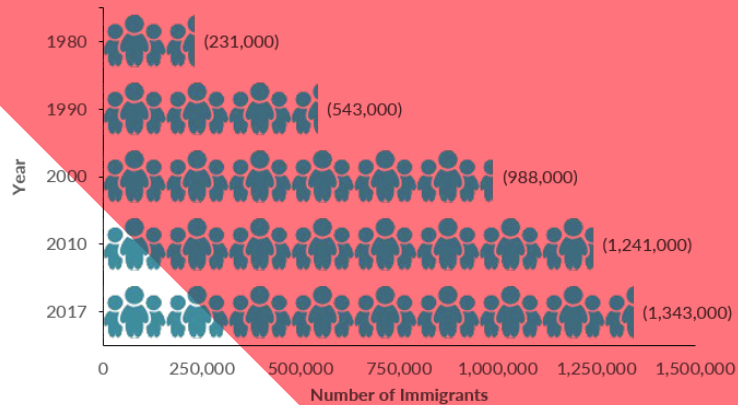
- ❖ Vietnam
 - 11 Vietnamese provinces: Low rate of exclusive breastfeeding (~30%), high rate of mixed feeding (~65%)
- ❖ San Diego, CA
 - Asian American population: High rate of exclusive breastfeeding (~76%), high rate of any breastfeeding (~96%)
- ❖ Social influences from social network (e.g. family) & healthcare professionals impacts feeding method in either regions





Barriers & Challenges

Transitions & Maintenance of Breastfeeding



Barriers & Challenges to Breastfeeding

Postpartum Mental Health

- ❖ Postpartum depression & mood disorders
- ❖ Physical pain translates to mental insecurities
- ❖ Self-efficacy and self-esteem in breastfeeding skills are affected



Immigration

- ❖ Cultural supportive network is disrupted
- ❖ Induces some immigrant mothers to abandon breastfeeding



Barriers & Challenges to Breastfeeding

Support System Infrastructure

Family Traditions

- ❖ Fear that lactating mother may suffer from “cold” disease & lack of access to abundant breast milk for infant

Biomedical Focus

- ❖ Implementing a 3-pronged approach:
 - Tailored educational materials
 - In-service clinician training
 - Proficient material distribution



Socioeconomic Status of Milk

Hierarchy of Milk

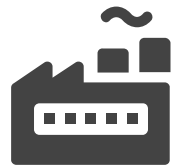
- ❖ Belief that formula is superior to breastmilk

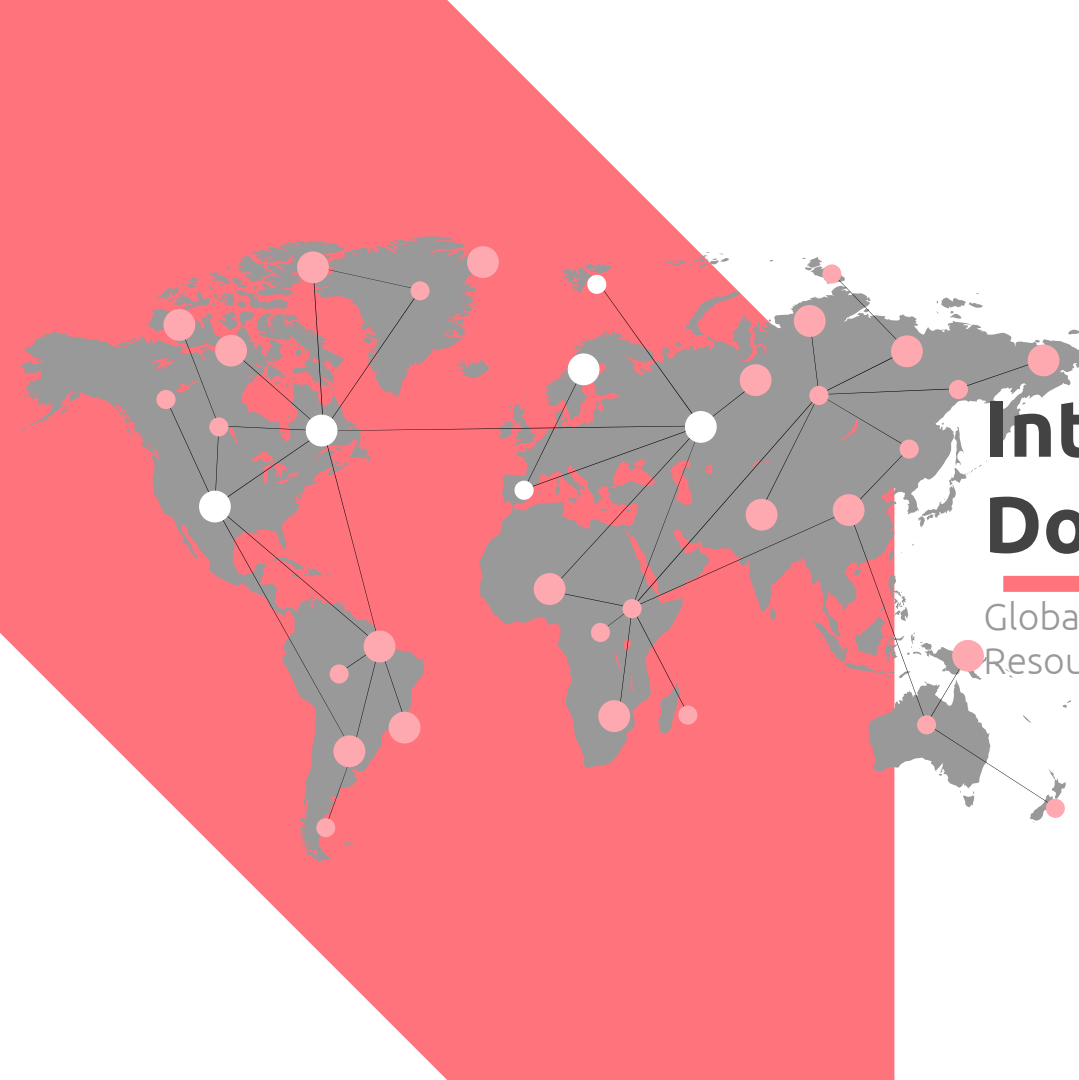
Work Obligations

- ❖ Pressures of returning to work after maternity leave

Education Matters

- ❖ Mothers with higher education levels have greater rates of longer exclusive breastfeeding





International & Domestic Support

Global, National, & Local Support
Resources Currently Available

VIETNAM

- ❖ *Alive & Thrive* Initiative: Advocate, support, & implement learning for breastfeeding practices in hospitals
- ❖ Regional & national partnerships
- ❖ Centers of Excellence for Breastfeeding
- ❖ Accreditation:
 - Central hospitals, by Ministry of Health (MOH)
 - Provincial & district hospitals, by Departments of Health (DOH)



CALIFORNIA

- ❖ Department of Public Health: Breastfeeding initiative from Division of Maternal, Child, & Adolescent Health
- ❖ UCSF: Breastfeeding Support Logic Model



SAN DIEGO

- ❖ Health & Human Services Agency: Maternal, Child, and Family Health Services (MCFHS)
- ❖ UCSD, Lactation Supportive Environments: Breastfeeding-Friendly San Diego (BFSD) Initiative



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO
LIVEWELLSD.ORG



First 5
San Diego



UC San Diego
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Center for
Community Health



SAN DIEGO

San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition

Women, Infants, & Children,
Southeast San Diego



Brief Overview: Infant Feeding Experience Survey

$n = 4$

75% new Vietnamese-American mothers

75% are foreign-born in Vietnam

100% delivered in California hospitals

EDUCATION & SUPPORT

50% Additional information and support needed

25% Adequate info and support given

25% Lack of relevant info and support

CONFIDENCE & SELF-EFFICACY

100% Feel confident about feeding her** baby

FEEDING METHOD

50% Exclusively breast milk

25% Formula only

25% Other - Cow's milk*

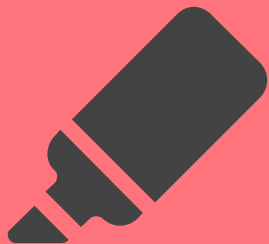
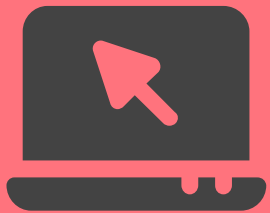
CHALLENGES

75% Latching issues

25% Breast pain from clogged ducts

* Child is toddler age, ~3.5 years

** Preferred pronouns, per participant



Research in Review

Limitations & Recommendations
Based on Literature Review



Findings of Research Limitations



LIMITATION 1

Disproportion between population size and breastfeeding support available to Vietnamese families in San Diego

LIMITATION 2

Local clinics with resources tailored to Vietnamese-speaking families

LIMITATION 3

Health education programs geared toward Vietnamese-American mothers



Recommendations of Solutions



SOLUTION 1

Run focus groups with families in Little Saigon to observe the needs and fit to appropriate scaling

SOLUTION 2

Partner with community health providers to share breastfeeding resources, bilingual option available

SOLUTION 3

Host /facilitate a quarterly educational program for the community in collaboration with other agencies

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References

Thank You!

