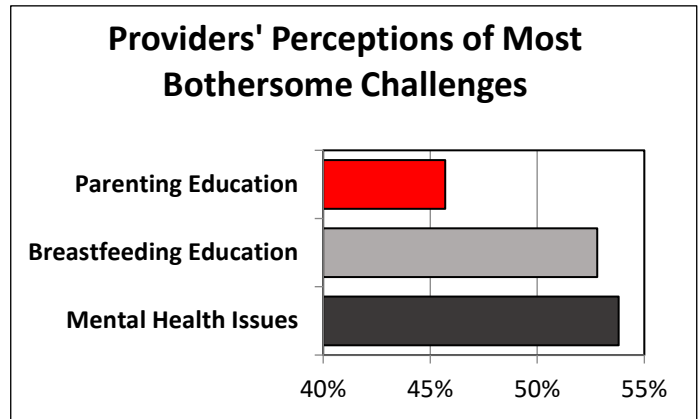
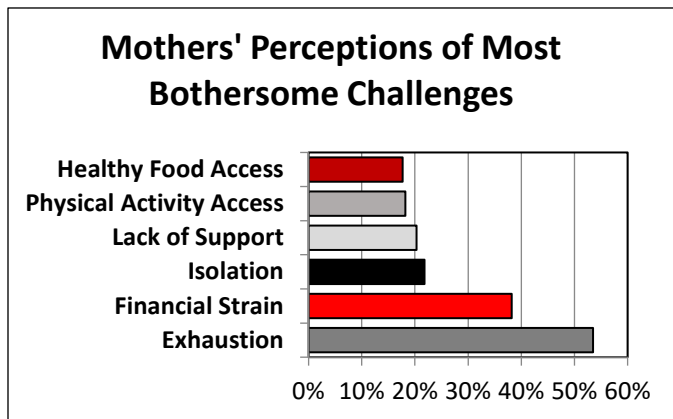




Mental and Physical Support (Maps) For Moms: A Comparison of Mothers & Providers Perceptions

Research consistently provides evidence that mothers have a critical role in the well-being of their children and the family as a whole. Specifically, a mother’s mental and physical health is an integral component to her family’s well-being. Unfortunately, pregnant and postpartum women are particularly vulnerable to mental and physical distress. In Nebraska alone, 1 in 7 women have reported symptoms of postpartum depression during the first year after delivery. To improve these critical issues it must first be understood what mothers and health providers see as mothers’ greatest needs and challenges. Thus, two surveys were conducted evaluating the perceptions of pregnant/postpartum women and maternal/infant health providers regarding women’s needs within the Omaha area. A total of 527 pregnant/postpartum women and 159 maternal/infant service providers in the Omaha metro completed the survey from May 2016-August 2016.

In regards to the greatest challenges for pregnant/postpartum women, women commonly reported mental health related concerns such as exhaustion (53.5%) and isolation (21.8%) as well as financial strain (38.2%). Similarly, providers reported mental health issues to be a significant challenge (53.8%) for Omaha women.



To overcome their challenges, women were asked to report what topics they would like more information on and how they would like to receive this information. Women most commonly cited stress/time management (20.4%) followed by breastfeeding/nutrition information (20.1%) as the topics they would like more information on. Women preferred to receive this information through online media sources (58.4%) or workshops/events (48.6%). Unfortunately, when providers were asked about the greatest gaps in the services provided in Omaha, they most frequently reported breastfeeding education (68.5%) followed by mental health services (64.1%) were lacking.

It is apparent that improving mothers’ mental health is a top concern for both women and health providers along with the need for greater education and support regarding breastfeeding. Additionally, mothers concerns regarding financial strain should be recognized and considered when providing education. Our related research has shown mothers needs significantly vary by income; however, financial strain is considered highly bothersome across all income levels. Identifying targeted strategies for different income level through online media or workshops/events could help to reduce the mental health distress associated with financial strain as well as other related concerns.

Questions or Comments? Please contact Dr. Danae Dinkel at dmdinkel@unomaha.edu or 402.554.3259