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A new analysis has found that **mothers** who are more **extroverted** and **less anxious** are **more likely** to **breastfeed**

and to continue to breastfeed than mothers who are introverted or anxious. Published early online in the [*Journal of Advanced Nursing*](#)

, the study indicates that new mothers with certain personalities may need additional support and education to help them feel confident, self assured, and knowledgeable about breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding is important for the health of both mother and baby: breastfed babies have lower levels of infections and allergies and are less likely to be overweight, while

mothers who breastfeed are less likely to develop certain cancers.

Many factors can affect whether a mother breastfeeds, but mothers who have lots of support, feel confident, and know how to overcome problems are more likely to breastfeed for longer. Understanding what makes a mother feel confident and supported is important to

increasing breastfeeding rates. Many studies have looked at the role of mothers' education, age, and relationships, but the link between breastfeeding and a mother's personality has not been explored.

To investigate, Amy Brown, PhD, of Swansea University in

the United Kingdom, surveyed 602 mothers with infants aged six to 12 months old. The questionnaire examined the mothers' personalities, how long they breastfed, and their attitudes and experiences of breastfeeding. Data

were collected between March and June 2009.

Mothers who indicated that they were extroverts and were emotionally stable were

significantly more likely to initiate and continue breastfeeding for a longer duration. Mothers who were introverted or anxious were more likely to use formula

milk or only
breastfeed for a
short while.

Dr. Brown
believes that the
findings can be

explained by the link between mothers' personalities and their attitudes and experiences of breastfeeding. Mothers who

were introverted
felt more
self-conscious
about
breastfeeding in
front of others
and were more
likely to formula

feed because
other people
wanted them to.
Meanwhile
mothers who
were anxious
found
breastfeeding

was more difficult and felt that they couldn't get the support they needed. These factors are known to be linked to low

breastfeeding
rates.

“The important
message from
the findings is

that some
mothers may
face more
challenges with
breastfeeding
based on their
wider

personality.
Although they
may want to
breastfeed,
more
introverted or
anxious

mothers may
need further
support in
boosting their
confidence and
learning about
how to solve

problems, and
they may need
encouragement
to make sure
they access
the
breastfeeding

support
services that
are available,”
said. Dr.
Brown.

Personality May Affect a New Mother's Decision to Breastfeed

Écrit par Wiley

Mardi, 06 Août 2013 14:18 -
