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| **Title of Innovation in policy and practice presentation**Bringing Back Caregiving with Breastfeeding in an Urban First Nations Neighbourhood |
| **Maximum 2500 characters (including spaces but excluding title)****Setting/problem**An inner city neighbourhood of Regina, Saskatchewan continues to have reoccurring issues of drug and alcohol use. In relation to this many children, mostly First Nations, are raised away from their families and in government foster care. With the promotion of breastfeeding in the neighbourhood that incorporated beliefs for breastfeeding from the First Nations culture, a community support program saw increased breastfeeding that was further supported by the province’s Baby-Friendly Initiative and World Health Organization. Increased breastfeeding by the mothers brought attention to an empowerment effect of breastfeeding for mothers’ caregiving association.**Intervention**To further support mothers’ caregiving opportunities, indicators of empowerment have been measured. Included was: increased self-esteem, more caregiving activities, and cessation of drug and alcohol use. These were assessed prenatally and again at two months postpartum. Indicators were then correlated to infant-feeding practises.**Outcomes**Findings supported a statistically significant improvement for empowerment scores when mothers breastfed. Mean scores for self-esteem increased from 2.87 to 3.57 (r=.90, p=<.001), and for caregiving, from 2.60 to 3.16 (r =.91, p = 0.001); drug and alcohol use decreased from 61% to 10% (p=<.001).**Implications**The study brings attention to the importance of breastfeeding to support caregiving opportunity in high-risk situations. Practitioners must be open to mothers’ caregiving opportunities looking for means to support it as with First Nations cultural affiliations. A positive outlook for caregiving is critical to rebuild marginalized populations whose caregiving ability has been minimized.**Preferred presentation format**Oral Presentation |