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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Preference for Formula Feeding Plays Key Role in Lower Breastfeeding Rates for African-American Women in the U.S.

New Rochelle, NY, April 12, 2010—African-American women have the lowest breastfeeding rate among the major racial/ethnic groups in the United States, and this may be explained mainly by their comfort level with formula feeding rather than any aversion to breastfeeding, according to a new study published in *Breastfeeding Medicine*, the Official Journal of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine published by [Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.](#) The paper is available free [online](#).

Breastfeeding has clear advantages for both babies and mothers, yet many women choose formula feeding instead. **Laurie Nommsen-Rivers**, from Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (Ohio), and **Caroline Chantry, Roberta Cohen, and Kathryn Dewey**, from the University of California at Davis and the UC-Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, sought to determine what modifiable factors might account for the racial/ethnic differences in breastfeeding behavior among women in the U.S.

Two major findings emerged: comfort with the idea of formula feeding had a much greater effect on intention to breastfeed than did comfort with breastfeeding; and formula-feeding comfort level was the only modifiable psychosocial factor that differed between African-American and non-African-American women in the study, and it explained the difference between ethnic disparities in intention to breastfeed. The authors propose that public health and educational efforts aimed at changing breastfeeding behavior should take into account women's attitudes toward formula feeding and should promote breastfeeding as the normal way to feed infants.

"This approach requires a complete paradigm change. Instead of promoting the tremendous benefits of breastfeeding to this population, the risks of formula feeding and the costs to health and the community of not breastfeeding will have to be incorporated into persuading these women to do the best for their infants and themselves," says **Ruth Lawrence, MD**, Editor-in-Chief of *Breastfeeding Medicine* and Professor of Pediatrics, University of Rochester School of Medicine.

Breastfeeding Medicine, the Official Journal of the [Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine](#), is an authoritative, peer-reviewed, multidisciplinary journal published bimonthly. The journal publishes original scientific papers, reviews, and case studies on a broad spectrum of topics in lactation medicine. It presents evidence-based research advances and explores the immediate and long-term outcomes of breastfeeding, including the

epidemiologic, physiologic, and psychological benefits of breastfeeding.

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