

# Mam knows best? Exploring intergenerational feeding practices and decision making with mothers and grandmothers in urban south Wales

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## BACKGROUND

- Breastfeeding has a range of benefits for mother and baby.
- Breastfeeding rates in Wales are very low with only one per cent of Welsh women exclusively breastfeeding their babies for six months, in line with World Health Organization guidance [1].
- Mothers choices in relation to feeding practices are complex and draw on multiple factors that are social, psychological and physiological [2].

## RESEARCH AIM

To explore the views and experiences of mothers and grandmothers relating to infant feeding, in order to gain an understanding of infant feeding decisions.

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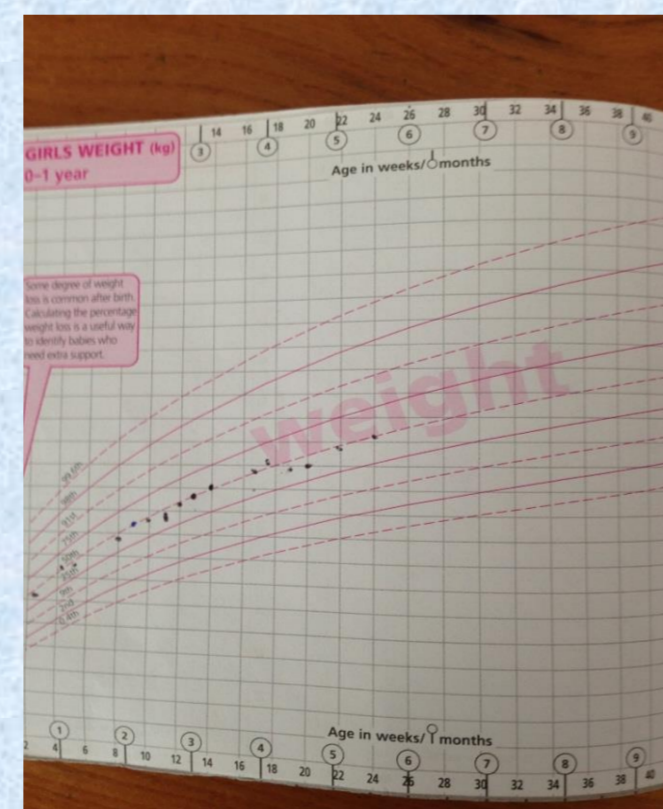
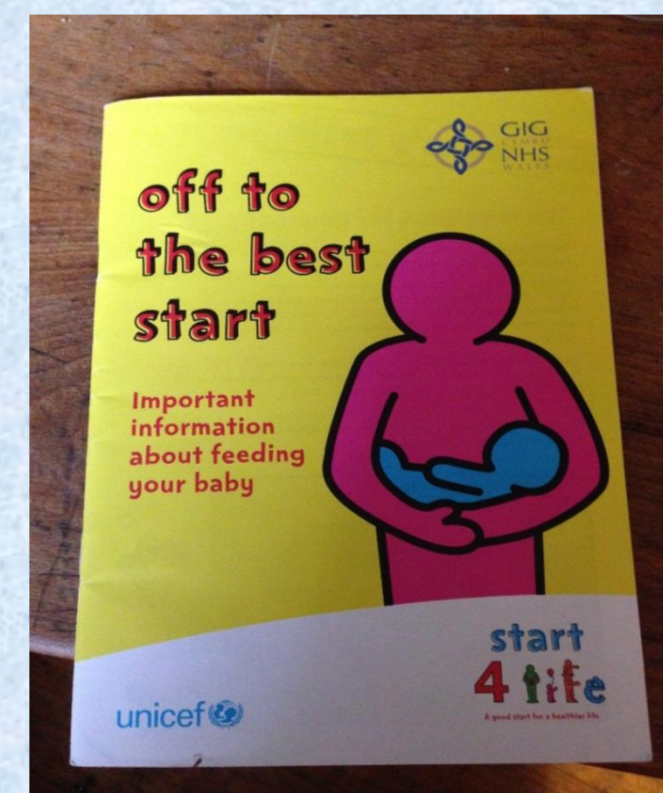
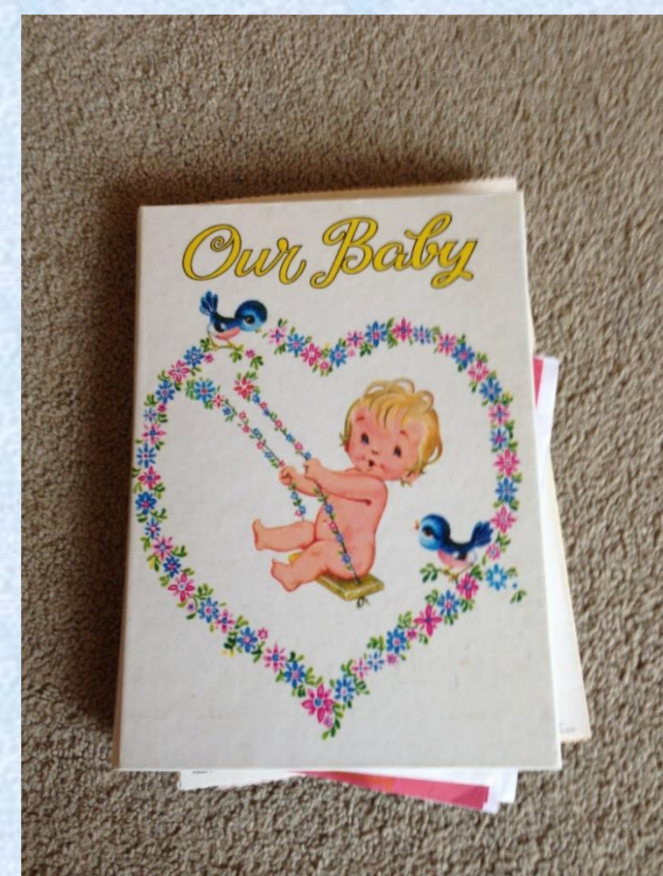


## METHOD

- Visual elicitation interviews [3] were conducted with six mother-grandmother pairs residing in deprived areas in south Wales. Mothers had recently given birth with infants in an age range of 2-24 months.
- Both mothers and grandmothers were asked to bring visual artefacts and photographs for discussion within elicitation interviews to engender a more participatory approach.
- Discussions focused on their views and experiences of infant feeding pre-pregnancy, during pregnancy, post-birth, post birth of grandchild and the associated barriers and motivators.

## KEY FINDINGS:

- There was not a direct intergenerational relationship between mothers' and daughters' feeding practices.
- Maternal support for feeding decisions were central in participants' accounts.



## RESULTS

Mothers who had not breastfed or had breast fed for a short time discussed a number of contributory factors to their decisions including;

- Conflicting advice from health providers
- Challenges of breastfeeding in public
- Lack of face-to-face support to initiate breastfeeding
- Lack knowledge and support as friends and family had predominately bottle fed
- Policing of infant feeding behaviour from a range of sources
- Uncertainty about the amount of milk being consumed
- Difficulties expressing milk and work commitments
- Feelings of guilt associated with own diet and lifestyle

Where mothers had engaged or intended to engage with long-term breastfeeding they had often sought further information outside of the general health care provision. This included wider friendship networks, social networking websites and specialist breastfeeding organisations.

## REFERENCES

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3. Mannay D. Making the familiar strange: can visual research methods render the familiar setting more perceptible? *Qualitative research*. 2010;10(1):91-111.