



IABLE Abstract Day 2025

"They Didn't Teach Me That": Evaluating Gaps in Doula Training on Infant Feeding'

“They Didn’t Teach Me That”: Evaluating Gaps in Doula Training on Infant Feeding’

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Disclaimer

- I have no conflict of interests to declare.
- I acknowledge that I follow in my practice and work both the IMS Act (India) and the International WHO Code of Marketing Breast Milk Substitutes.



Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. **Identify key gaps** in doula training related to infant feeding support, based on recent survey findings.
2. **Understand how these gaps impact** doulas' ability to provide effective, inclusive care to new parents.
3. **Explore practical recommendations** for improving doula training programs to better support diverse infant feeding needs.



Why this matters

- Doulas play a **critical role** in supporting infant feeding—but many feel **underprepared** due to gaps in training.
- Survey findings highlight a **clear need for more comprehensive, inclusive, and practical education** on breastfeeding, bottle feeding, and cultural approaches to infant feeding.
- By **strengthening doula training**, we can help ensure that more families—especially those in underserved communities—receive **equitable, informed, and confident support** in their early feeding journeys.
- Listening to doulas and investing in their education is not just good practice—it's a **public health imperative**.



Overview

- **Method:** Online survey of doulas
- **Focus:** Self-reported preparedness and infant feeding content in training
- **Participants:** 10 doulas across India and one in Netherlands



Key Finding

Gaps in Training

- Limited lactation education
- Little to no content on formula or bottle feeding
- Lack of practical feeding support guidance

Doula Feedback

- Limited lactation education
- Little to no content on formula or bottle feeding
- Lack of practical feeding support guidance



Impact on Care

- Limited lactation education
- Little to no content on formula or bottle feeding
- Lack of practical feeding support guidance



Recommendations

- Include diverse infant feeding methods in trainings
- Add hands-on feeding support modules
- Create continuing education partnerships (e.g. with lactation consultants)



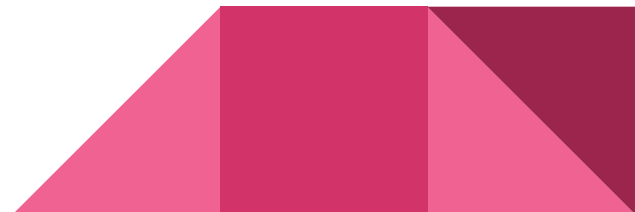
The Bigger Picture

- Doulas want to be part of the solution
- Training reforms = stronger public health outcomes
- We must listen to their voices



Conclusion

- Doulas play a **critical role** in supporting infant feeding—but many feel **underprepared** due to gaps in training.
- Survey findings highlight a **clear need for more comprehensive, inclusive, and practical education** on breastfeeding, bottle feeding, and cultural approaches to infant feeding.
- By **strengthening doula training**, we can help ensure that more families—especially those in underserved communities—receive **equitable, informed, and confident support** in their early feeding journeys.
- Listening to doulas and investing in their education is not just good practice—it's a **public health imperative**.



Resource list

- <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD003766.pub5/full> **Continuous support for women during childbirth**
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9800927/> **Effects of psychosocial support during labour and childbirth on breastfeeding, medical interventions, and mothers' wellbeing in a Mexican public hospital: a randomised clinical trial**
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23837663/> **Doula care supports near-universal breastfeeding initiation among diverse, low-income women**



Any Questions?



Thanks!

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