

Breastfeeding Equity: Protocol for a Concept Analysis Using Rodger's Evolutionary Approach

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Background: Despite well-documented benefits for infants and mothers, fewer than half of infants worldwide are breastfed for six months, with health inequities driving disparities in breastfeeding rates across and within countries. Although these disparities have persisted, the concept of equity related to breastfeeding has only recently been introduced into the literature. Advocacy for equity in breastfeeding outcomes is increasing, yet its definition remains inconsistent.

Objective: To analyze how breastfeeding equity is currently conceptualized in the literature and provide conceptual clarification.

Methods: Rodger's evolutionary method will be employed. Peer-reviewed articles from PubMed, CINAHL, and Scopus as well as grey literature, will be searched using keywords and subject headings for breastfeeding and equity. Articles will be screened by title, abstract, and full text, with data extracted independently by two reviewers. Key themes (e.g., concept attributes, antecedents, consequences, contextual factors) will be identified using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis framework.

Results: A librarian-assisted search strategy was completed in December 2025, yielding 3783 records. The results will be available by December 2026. Findings will be presented using a narrative description of the identified themes.

Conclusion: This concept analysis will yield a clear and useful conceptual definition of breastfeeding equity to guide perinatal research, practice and policy, contributing to more equitable access to breastfeeding support and improved maternal and child health outcomes.

Keywords: Breastfeeding, Equity, Evolutionary approach, Concept analysis.

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