

National Survey of Breastfeeding Policy in THC Positive Mothers

Sarra Bae, DO; Natalie Davis, MD, MMSc

University of Maryland School of Medicine and Children's Hospital



BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE

- In 2016, 4.9% of pregnant women between ages 15-44 years old reported marijuana use.
- Medical uses for THC include: antiemetics, anxiety, depression, insomnia, PTSD
- THC transfers into human milk; causes storage of THC in lipid-filled tissues (ie, brain)
- Prenatal exposure to THC may affect the neurotransmitter systems of the fetus and their functions.
- There is limited and variable evidence on the effects of maternal cannabis use (prenatally or during lactation) on fetus/infant.
- The recommendations for maternal THC use from national organizations are inconsistent.

PURPOSE

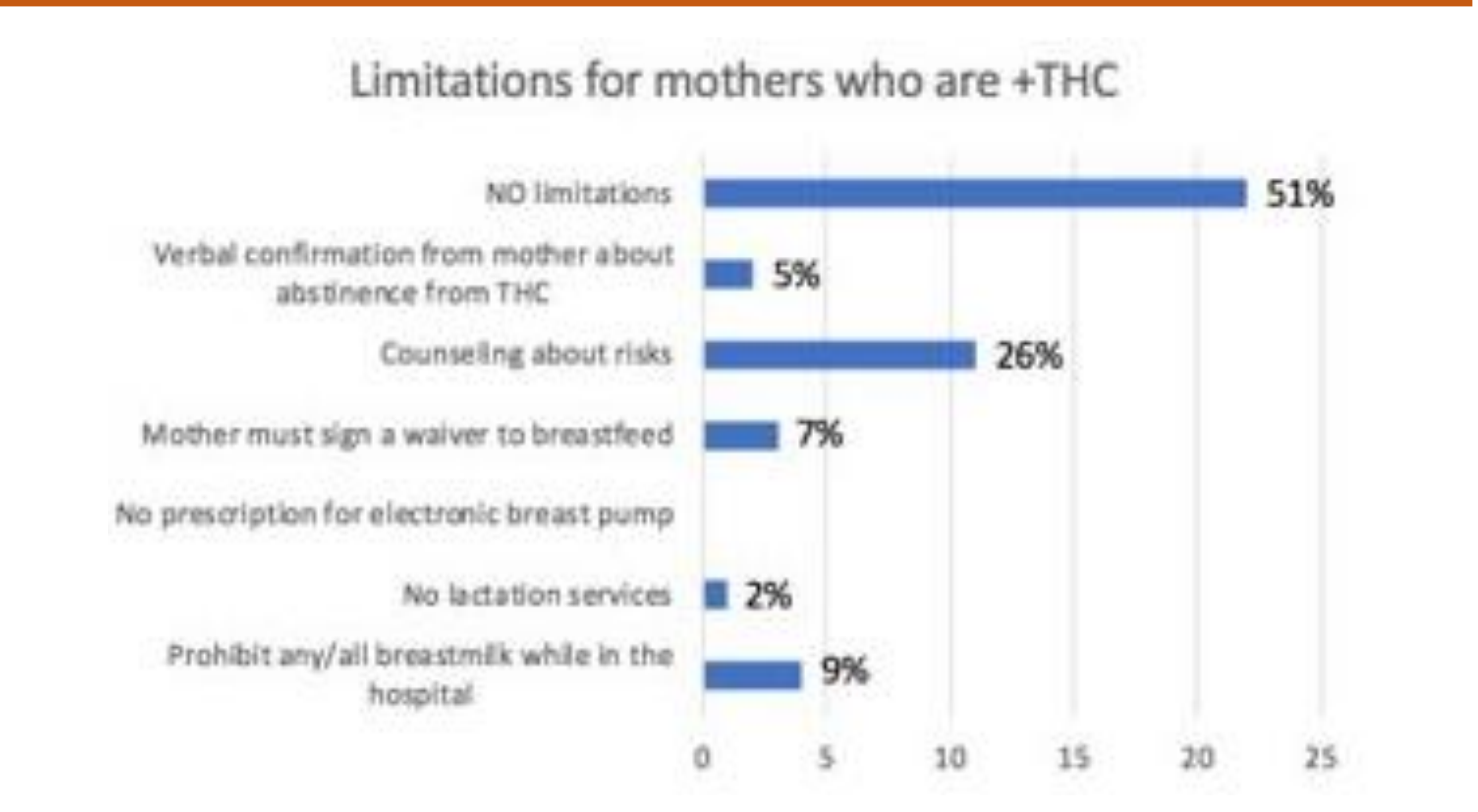
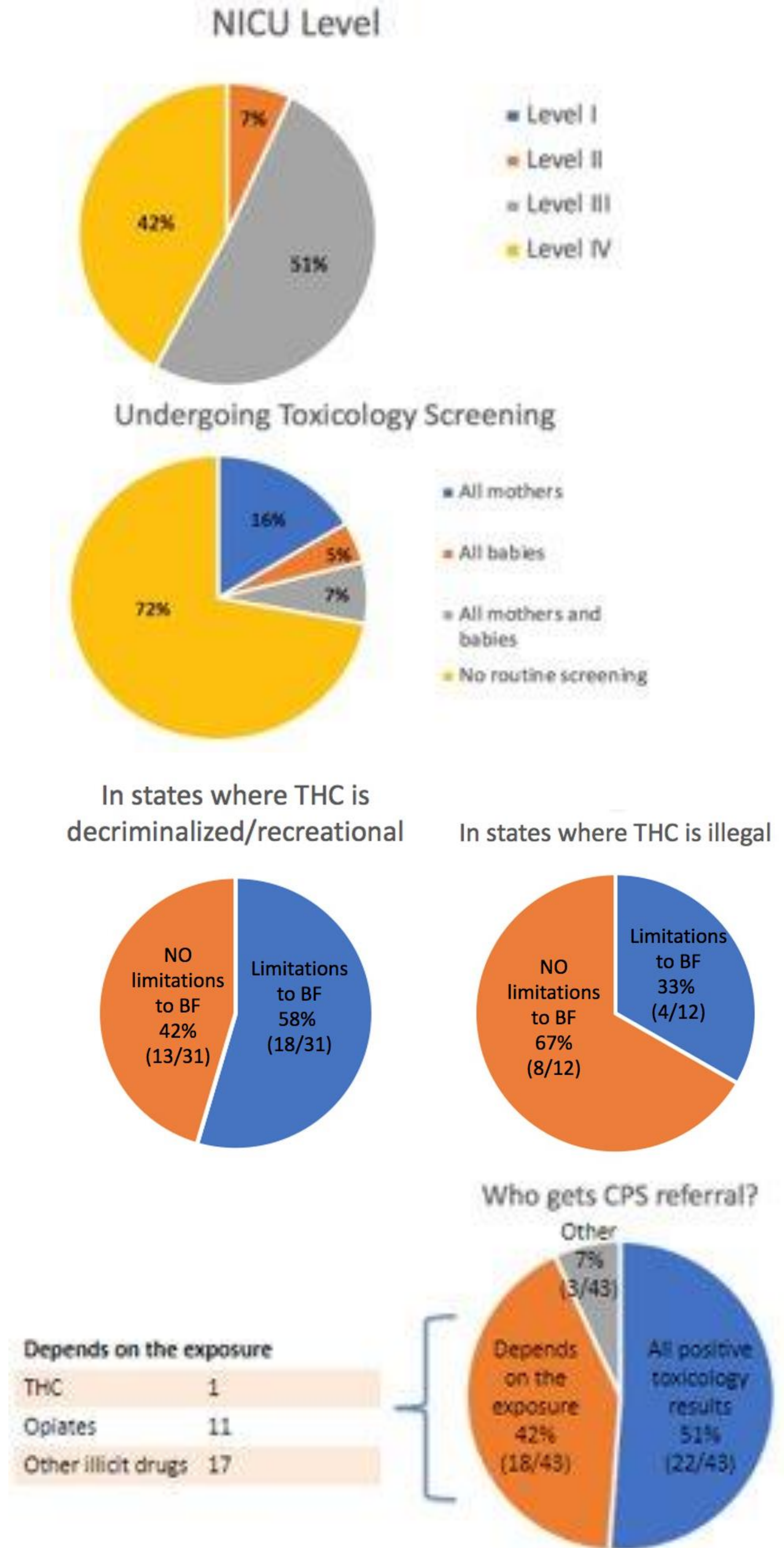
- The objective of this study is to perform a national survey of NICUs regarding their breastfeeding policy for mothers with a positive toxicology report.

METHODS

- National cross-sectional survey distributed via Redcap
- Surveying level II-IV NICUs across the country on their policy for lactation support and breastfeeding provisions based on toxicology screens
- Description statistics to evaluate from the survey:
 - Incidence of NICU breastfeeding policies
 - Lactation consultants
 - Toxicology screening protocol
 - Effects of toxicology status on lactation support
 - THC legalization/decriminalization of the state

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- 43 responses representing 21 states
- 88% have a breastfeeding policy



CONCLUSIONS

- Wide variation in hospital policies regarding:
 - Toxicology testing for mother/baby dyads
 - Limitations to breastfeeding in mothers who are THC positive on toxicology
 - Which mothers have a CPS referral
- Inconsistencies may be a reflection of inconsistencies in currently available recommendations
- Limitations include small study size (but ongoing) and relying on accuracy of responses

NEXT STEPS

- Collecting more surveys to have a wider national distribution
- Assessing the impact and change as more states begin to pass law to allow marijuana for recreational use

