

**Title** –Maternal Health: Breastfeeding Needs Assessment Among Mixtec Women in Richmond, Virginia

**Program of Study** – Masters of Public Health: Global Health

**Presentation Type** – Print Poster

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**Category** – Theoretical Proposal

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to assess the maternal health needs of the Mixtec women living in Richmond, VA at the Mixtec Health Fair. There is an estimated 5,000 indigenous Mixtec people living in Richmond who are originally from Mexico. The men and women of this community speak Mixtec, with the exception of the younger generations who speak Spanish and some English. There is a strong community among themselves and a deep rooted commitment to their religious beliefs and practices. Many of the Mixtec people have poor health due to lack of medical care and health behaviors. The goal of this study is to identify the rates of breastfeeding among this group of women and potential barriers that may hinder their ability to breastfeed.

A needs assessment was performed at the Mixtec Health Fair on December 6, 2016 in Richmond, Virginia at New Hope church through the partnership of Masters of Public Health students at Liberty University, Nuevo Amancer, and New Hope church. The needs assessment was administered through a questionnaire that included a section to asses each woman’s breastfeeding habits, current health behaviors, and potential barriers that would hinder their

choice to breastfeed. In addition to the questionnaire, a breastfeeding booth was available for additional maternal information and resources regarding breastfeeding.

The purpose of the study was to find out the rates of breastfeeding among this group of indigenous women and the social determinates that may be keeping each woman from breastfeeding their baby. Prior to the needs assessment, my hypothesis was that the Mixtec women would have very low breastfeeding rates due to social determinates. Out of the six women surveyed, only four of the woman were of child bearing age. In addition, non of the women completed the survey which may have been due to a language barrier, confusion, or embarrassment of the topic. Due to the low number of women that came to the health fair, I was unable to gather enough data to concluded any statistical significance from the assessment. In future research I intend to have my population target among this group of women to be of child bearing age. Future research findings will provide a baseline of the maternal and child health needs among this population.

**Christian Worldview Integration:** My passion to better the health of the Mixtec women in Richmond, Virginia stems from my passion to be an advocate for those in need and my interpretation of what scripture says. This group of indigenous people lack in receiving proper medical care and are in a culture that is not familiar to their own. 1 John 3:17 says, "But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?" Hebrews 6:10 says, "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them." The health needs among this group of people is evident. I want to be a voice for those who are in need and by doing so I can use my future research findings to bring health

needs to other's attention. With the proposed research, I intend on becoming more culturally competent of the Mixtec in order to better bridge the gap between social determinates and maternal health needs. Christ asks us to care for and love those in need and in doing so I want to help Mixtec women who lack in health resources. I am privileged to have the opportunity to perform research as a graduate student that can be used to better other people's lives in the process. By furthering my research on breastfeeding rates among the Mixtec population in Richmond, Virginia, I hope to help mothers understand the health benefits of breastfeeding for themselves and their children.