

The Skåne Panel

# Breastfeeding: Knowledge and attitudes

A Swedish civic survey. May/June 2020

Conducted by Indikator (the Institute for Quality Indicators)

## Analysis of open-ended answers



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>A summary of representative quotes</b>	<b>3</b>
The analysis	4
The respondents	5
<b>Results</b>	<b>6</b>
Categories with quantification	7
Categories and code keys	8
Categories and representative quotes	9
Comparisons between groups	12



# A SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES



“Interesting! I have no children of my own yet, so I took the opportunity to research the answers after the questionnaire. I was not aware of the many health benefits of breastfeeding. It is a difficult balancing act not to blame those who do not want to or are unable to breastfeed – while at the same time making people aware of the health benefits. I feel personally that I would like to breastfeed in the future, but I have heard so many claims that bottle feeding is the better option.”

Woman, 29 years or younger



“Just like with much else in our society, those who breastfeed should use their common sense and adapt to the situation and location. I have personally never seen anyone breastfeed in an offensive manner, but that does not mean that it is not possible to do so. Just keep on breastfeeding but use your common sense and focus on what is best for the child!”

Man, 60–69 years



“We have to listen to the parents when it comes to breastfeeding. Even though breastfeeding is what is best for the child in theory, it does not always work out. If so, the parents should have the option to use formula without their choice being questioned.”

Woman, 30–44 years



“More knowledge of breastfeeding is needed at the child health services. A lot of healthcare workers promote the introduction of food at 4 months and stress mothers who intend to breastfeed longer. It is a problem, especially if the baby does not like food. If any problem occur, the solution is “supplementary feeding”. A lot more qualified, accessible support, like breastfeeding clinics and breastfeeding nurses are needed. Many mothers give up breastfeeding because they do not get enough support”.

Woman, 30–44 years



“Even though I am 81 years old, I know very little about breastfeeding.”

Man, 70 or older

# THE ANALYSIS

## Background

The civic survey *Breastfeeding: Knowledge and attitudes* questionnaire ended with the open-ended question; "Is there anything you would like to add?"

The analysis of the incoming answers should be considered as a complement to the Skåne panel report on *Breastfeeding 2020:5/6*. The analysis provides additional information about breastfeeding attitudes, experiences and knowledge among the Scanian population.

## The analysis

A total of 985 respondents answered the final question. The answers were thematically coded by the method of qualitative content analysis. Initially, a selection of full text answers were coded by a number of consultants. Then a code key was developed. By using comparative analysis, seven categories were identified and quantified.

The answers analysed and presented in the report are those that were able to be coded and assigned to a category. Non-answers like "No" and "Nothing" have not been included in the analysis. In total, 668 individual answers were coded and further analysed.

Answers that contained comments about the questionnaire and survey structure were coded but are not presented in this report.

The results have been weighted based on regional area, gender, and age to better reflect the distribution among the Scanian population.

## The report

The categories are presented along with its distribution presented in percent. Since some answers contained information encoded to more than one category, the total sum exceeds 100 percent.

Each category is described and exemplified by a representative quote.



# THE RESPONDENTS

	Percentage	Quantity
<b>Age</b>		
29 or younger	12.1%	81
30 - 44	26.8%	179
45 - 59	28.3%	189
60 - 69	14.5%	97
70 or older	18.3%	122
<i>Total</i>		668
<b>Gender</b>		
Women	66.5%	444
Men	33.1%	221
Other	0.4%	3
<i>Total</i>		668

*Background variables, unweighted data.*



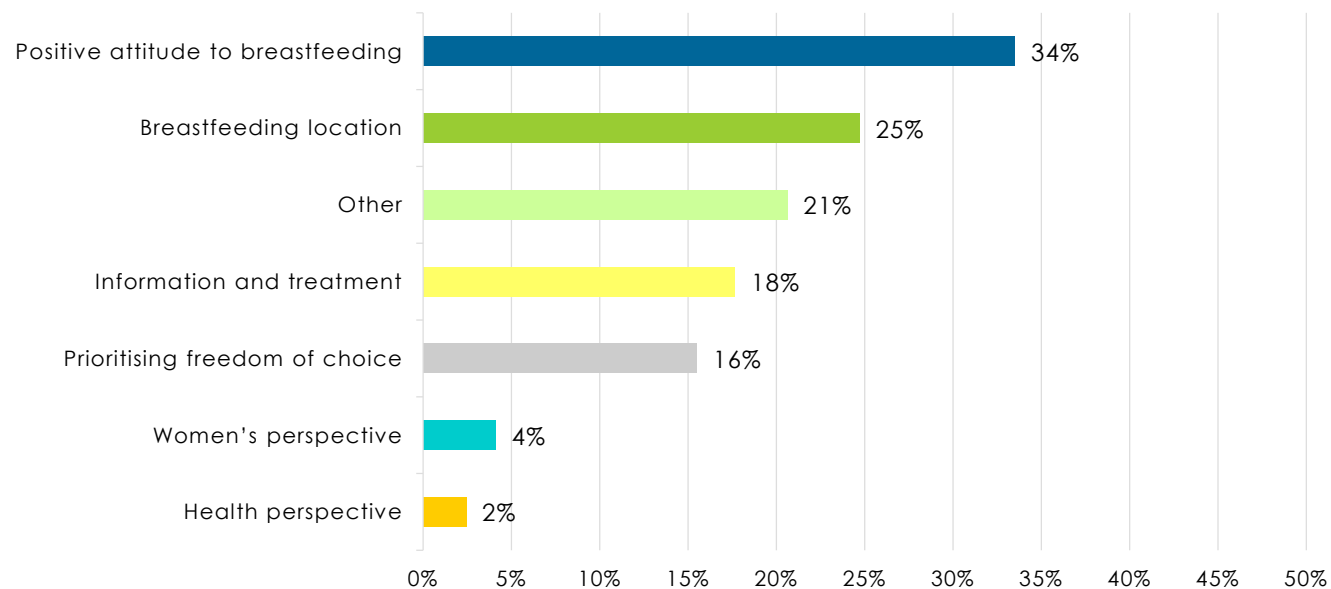
# Results



# Categories with quantification

Seven categories, based on the analysis of 668 freely formulated answers were identified and quantified. The categories: positive attitude to breastfeeding, breastfeeding location, other, information and treatment, prioritising freedom of choice, women's perspective, health perspective are presented in the diagram below.

## Is there anything you would like to add?



# Categories and code keys

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	CODE KEY (examples)
<b>Positive attitude to breastfeeding</b>	Answers expressing positive attitudes towards breastfeeding.	Natural, normalise, tolerance, encourage, a human right.
<b>Breastfeeding location</b>	Answers expressing different attitudes towards public breastfeeding.	Public, inappropriate, cover, discreetly, the environment, private, showing
<b>Information and treatment</b>	Answers expressing the importance of breastfeeding support and information about breastfeeding from the health care services and from society in general.	Child healthcare clinics, treatment, health service, knowledge, support, help, advertisement, information
<b>Prioritising freedom of choice</b>	Answers expressing the importance of breastfeeding as a matter of individual choice.	Choosing, comfortable, guilt, bottle feeding, preference
<b>Women's perspective</b>	Answers expressing breastfeeding as a women's issue	Issues, woman, perspective, well-being
<b>Health perspective</b>	Answers expressing the importance of the health benefits of breastfeeding.	Nutrition, immune system, malnourishment, infection, protection, diet
<b>Other</b>	Answers that do not fall into other categories and are too varied to form their own.	





# Categories and representative quotes

CATEGORY	EXAMPLE
<b>Positive attitude towards breastfeeding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Breastfeeding is something natural.</li> <li>- Encourage more people to breastfeed.</li> <li>- Breastfeeding is what is best, if you have the option.</li> <li>- I think it is a sad and revolting development that these questions need to be asked about something as natural as breastfeeding.</li> </ul>
<b>Breastfeeding location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mothers, breastfeed wherever you want! It is natural!!!!!!!</li> <li>- Breastfeeding should be done discreetly. Bystanders might also feel embarrassed.</li> <li>- Whether or not to breastfeed in public is for the individual mother to decide and not a matter for the society nor the public.</li> <li>- Just like with so much else, the one who is breastfeeding should use common sense and adapt to the situation and location. I have never seen anyone breastfeed in an offensive manner, but that does not mean it is not possible to do so. Just keep on breastfeeding with common sense and focus on what is best for the child!</li> </ul>
<b>Information and treatment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- My experience as a new parent is that the healthcare workers in Skåne have very varying attitudes towards breastfeeding. I think it should be emphasised that there is nothing wrong with bottle feeding.</li> <li>- Breastfeeding would increase if new mothers got more support and information.</li> <li>- The most important aspect of breastfeeding support is early information about the benefits of breastfeeding, preferably as early as in biology class in school. The region should invest in breastfeeding clinics that could provide practical support and advice, preferably at child health services and at antenatal care clinics.</li> <li>- What is most important is to not put blame. It is likely that many will feel like bad mothers if the breastfeeding does not work out. Despite of good intentions, I believe that healthcare providers can cause feelings of guilt. However, the staff at the breastfeeding clinic were amazing. I am a man and this is my experience.</li> </ul>



# Categories and representative quotes

CATEGORY	EXAMPLE
<p><b>Prioritising freedom of choice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interesting! I have no children of my own yet, so I took the opportunity to research the answers after the questionnaire. I was not aware of the many health benefits of breastfeeding. It is a difficult balancing act not to blame those who do not want to or are unable to breastfeed – while at the same time making people aware of the health benefits. I feel personally that I would like to breastfeed in the future, but I have heard so many claims that bottle feeding is the better option</li> <li>- I support breastfeeding and breastfeeding in public. But I also support the notion that it is okay not to breastfeed and that mothers should not be pressured to breastfeed at all costs. Breastfeeding is incredible when it works out, but is hell when it does not!</li> <li>- If you cannot breastfeed for whatever reason, you should not feel bad about it, nor be blamed about it. But still, I believe that it is a good start in life.</li> <li>- We have to listen to what the parents when it comes to breastfeeding. Even if breastfeeding is what is best for the child in theory, sometimes it does not work out, and in those cases, the parents must have the option to use formula without their choice being questioned.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Women's perspective</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We cannot have a situation where mothers are being told that they have to breastfeed. Not everyone can breastfeed/produce milk. The most important thing is that the child is fed and that the mother is well.</li> <li>- The most important thing is that the mother feel that breastfeeding in different environments is accepted. I.e. the mother's well-being is the most important issue (In addition to the child's nutritious diet).</li> <li>- As a woman, I feel that it is important to pay attention to the mother's experience of breastfeeding. It was not until having my third child that a midwife at the breastfeeding clinic told me to stop breastfeeding since I was in so much pain and feeling so miserable... Breastmilk is the best option, but it cannot be allowed to intrude on the well-being and on the interactions between the mother and the child.</li> <li>- Sometimes, you can not get the breastfeeding to work no matter how much you try as a mother, which brings negative emotions. If so, you need to know that you can still be a good mother and that being close to your child is what is the most important aspect, regardless of whether you breastfeed or bottle feed.</li> </ul>



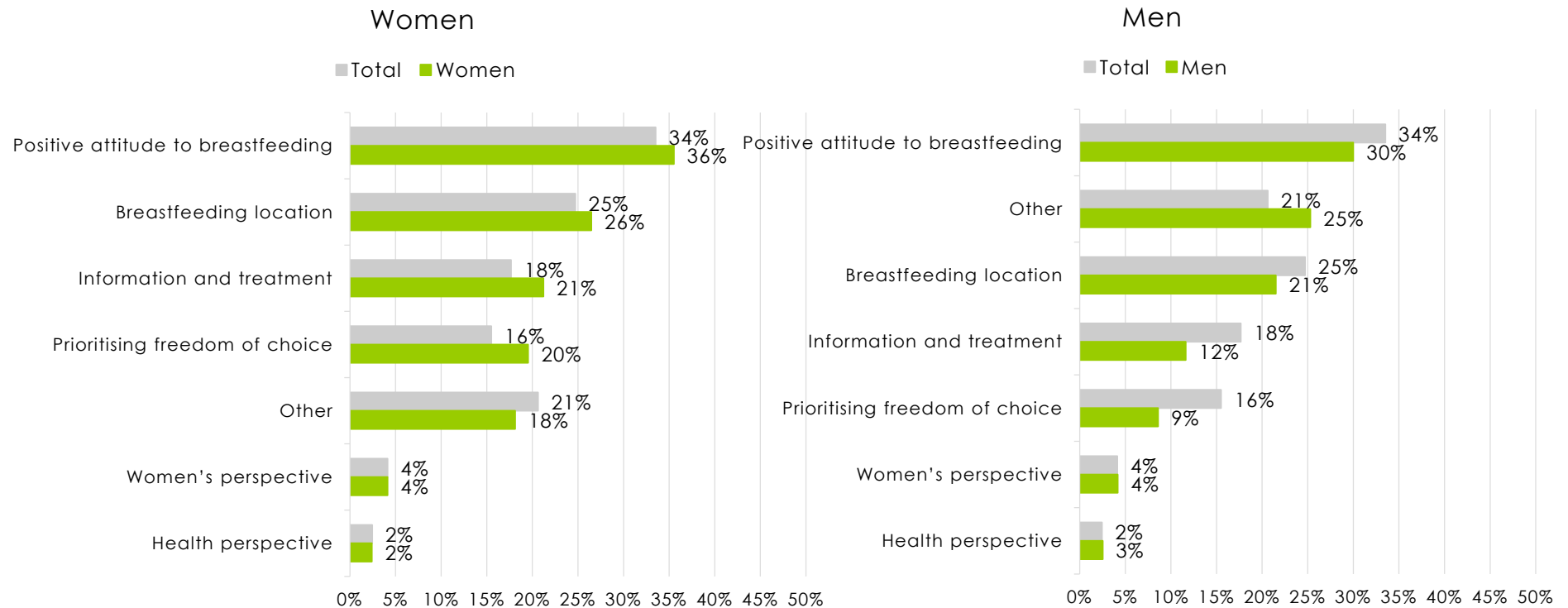
# Categories and representative quotes

CATEGORY	EXAMPLE
<b>Health perspective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The breast milk contains everything the baby needs</li><li>- Breastfeeding is good in terms of allergy protection, the parents' financial situation and the child's emotional development. I think that should be enough as arguments in favour of breastfeeding</li><li>- Breastfeeding is convenient for the mother and provides the child with adequate nutrition.</li><li>- I am a quite uncertain with regards to respiratory infections, but I do know that breastfeeding gives better resistance to illness in general.</li></ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- I have no children.</li><li>- I have breastfed 3 children. Both positive and negative experiences. It is practical since you always carry the food with you. But you feel kind of unclear.</li><li>- Despite my 81 years of age, I know very little about breastfeeding.</li><li>- My oldest daughter (born in 1988) was fully breastfed for six months, and partially until she was 2 years old. This was recommended from the child health services since she had severe allergy.</li></ul>



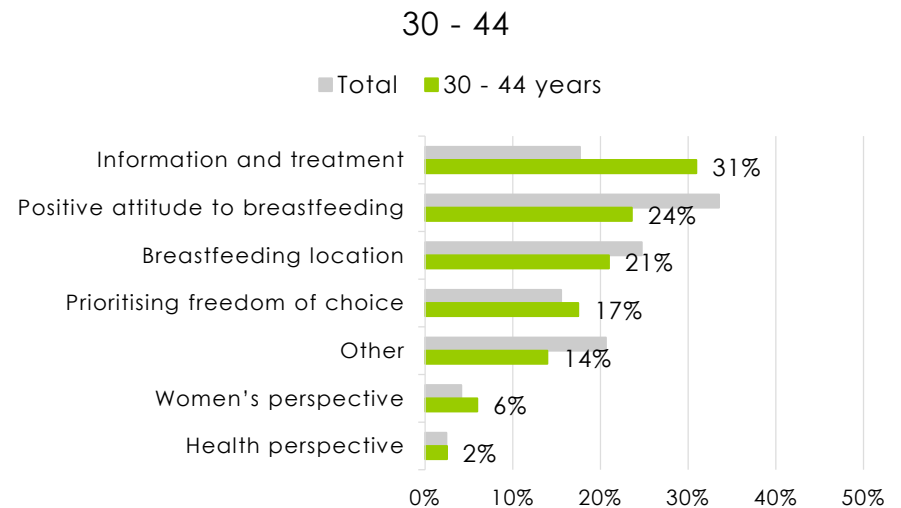
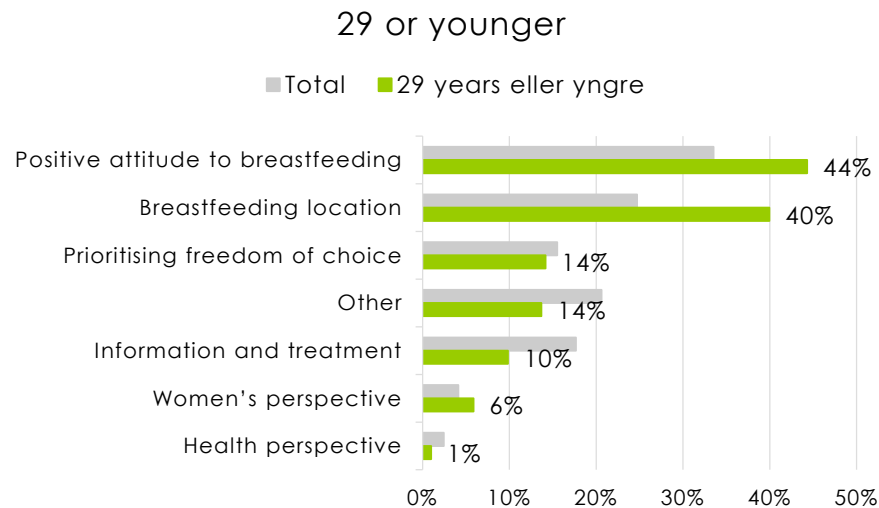
# Comparisons between groups

A larger proportion of women answered to the open-ended question compared to men. The answers reflect that both men and women have positive attitudes towards breastfeeding. Many answers concern opinions about breastfeeding in public. A higher proportion of women prioritise the freedom to choose. A larger proportion of the answers from men were categorized in the *Other* category, which means that the comments did not fall into any of the other categories.



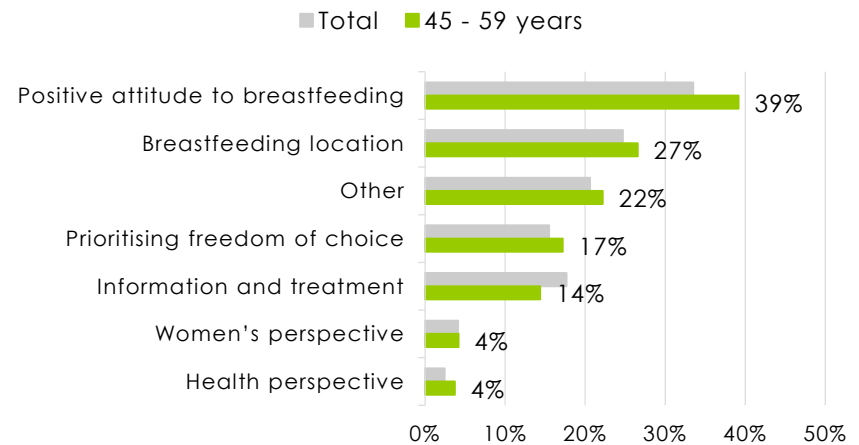
# Comparisons between groups

A larger proportion of respondents aged 30 – 44 answered the open-ended question and represents the respondents expressing the least positive attitude towards breastfeeding in the open answers. The youngest respondents express positive attitudes to breastfeeding and opinions about breastfeeding in public to a larger extent compared to other age groups.

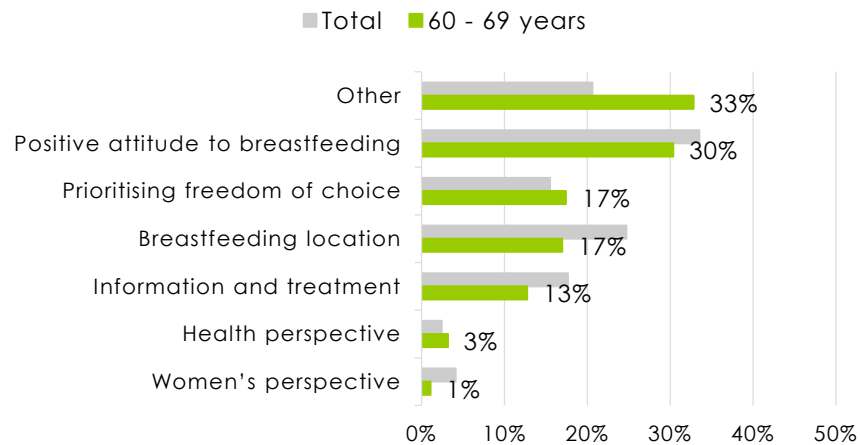


# Comparisons between groups

45 - 59



60 - 69



70 or older

