



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Postpartum Experiences

In the United States from 2013-2023

The postpartum experience survey was created by Willow Gibson for a research project assigned in a course titled "History of Midwifery and Women's Healthcare in the US" at College of the Atlantic in 2022. The survey was used to collect data about the postpartum experiences of those who gave birth between 2013 and 2023 in the U.S.A. There were 784 responses. The purpose of collecting this information was to observe the state of postpartum care in the US with the aim of recognizing gaps in care.

Support Types

BASELINE SUPPORT:

Care needed to prevent the worst long term health outcomes (i.e. organ prolapse, long term depression, etc.)

- Lactation support, pelvic floor PT, emotional support, hospital/office follow up appointments, unpaid parental leave

COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

Care that builds and maintains community around the birthing parent/family for long term support

- Help with meals (meal train or meal service), new parent groups (online and in-person), family and friend support, and paid parental leave

PHYSICAL SUPPORT:

Care that increases the birthing parent and baby's physical wellbeing beyond baseline support

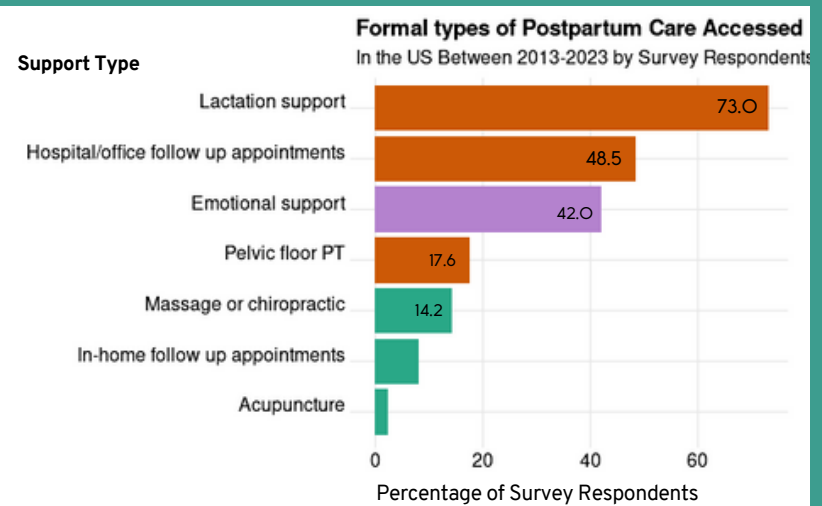
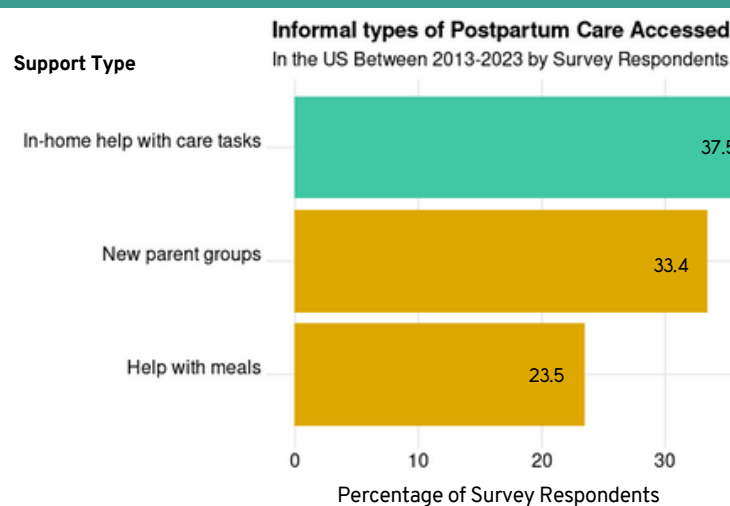
- In-home help with care tasks, in-home follow up appointments, bodywork like massage or chiropractic, acupuncture, or overnight help

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:

Formal and informal mental health treatment, such as therapy, PPD/PPA medications, and advice from loved ones or doulas

LACTATION SUPPORT:

Access to high quality pumping equipment and lactation services from IBCLC lactation consultants, La Leche League Groups, as well as Doulas, Midwives, Nurses, and family members. Part of baseline support.



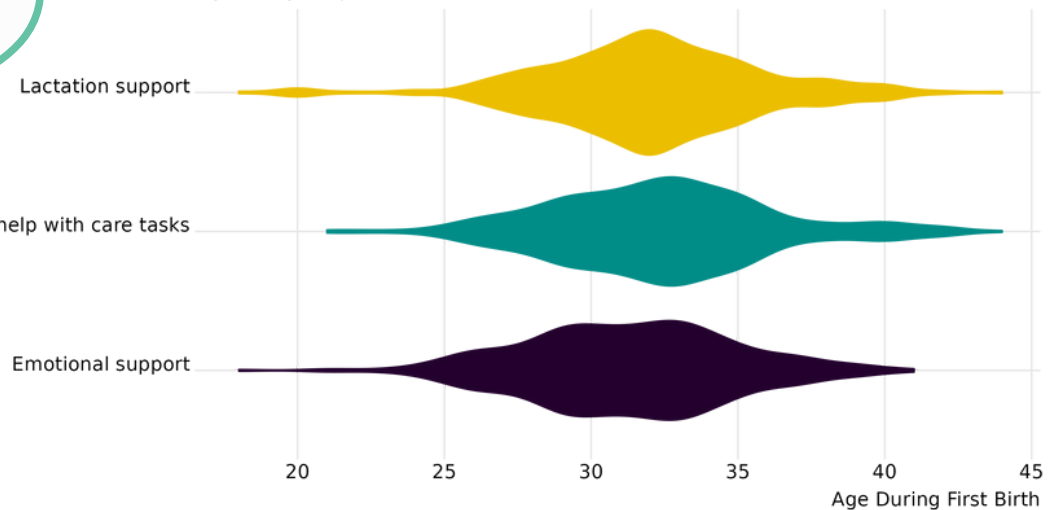
Among survey respondents, access to formal* types of baseline support was most common, whereas less than half of respondents reported access to other support types. (*Formal refers to services available through formal health care rather than family/community support.)

Care Tasks

As defined by the author KC Davis, LPC: "Care tasks describes any task, chore, or errand that is required to care for self and keep life going. Typically, these tasks are recurring, never-ending, and are required to be completed in order to "get on with living". In the context of the postpartum experience, care tasks might include childcare for other children, help with cleaning, cooking, or laundry, holding the baby while the parent(s) sleep or bathe, picking up groceries, and other helpful tasks around the home.

Top 3 Most Critical Postpartum Care Types

by Survey Respondents Across the US



The majority of survey participants fall between ages 29 and 35. Within this age group, we can see a fairly consistent pattern in the frequency that these care types were mentioned as most critical to their postpartum experience. Almost double as many respondents had access to lactation support compared to the other two most critical care types.

Interestingly, "Massage" was commonly mentioned in ideal care, despite only 14.2 % reporting access to this type of care.

Most common words used to answer "In a best case scenario, list all types of care and support you would need or want in the first year postpartum."

Most common words used to answer "What support was most critical to you and your household in the first year following birth?"