

Dr Sharon Parella (IBCLC, PhD)



Dr Perrella is a human lactation researcher with more than 25 years clinical experience in paediatric and child health, midwifery, neonatal intensive care nursing, and 11 years private practice as an IBCLC. Her clinical research focuses on breastfeeding and lactation outcomes in preterm, healthy and complicated dyads, with a special interest in low milk production. She has recently been involved in the investigation of milk 24h production volumes in groups of women with and without pregnancy and health complications, some of which were associated with a significantly increased risk of low milk production. Her clinical experience informs research design to ensure that testing and interventions are implemented in a way that is highly acceptable to breastfeeding mothers and health care providers. Sharon enjoys the exchange of information and research translation when talking to mothers, community groups and health professionals.

Antenatal screening for lactation risk factors and breastfeeding outcomes

Twenty years ago, American paediatrician Marianne Neifert pointed out that lactation is often spoken of as if it's an infallible process, and yet most of us have cared for women that struggle to make enough milk for their babies. Like any other physiological process, it is possible that there can be disease and dysfunction of the lactating breast that causes low milk supply even with early and frequent breastfeeding and when support is available. In recent years the evidence has suggested that specific complications in pregnancy are associated with atypical breast development in pregnancy and subsequent low milk supply. In this presentation we will explore the current evidence, discuss the impact of this knowledge on our practice and learn about current studies that are attempting to uncover the pathophysiology behind low milk supply after pregnancy complications.