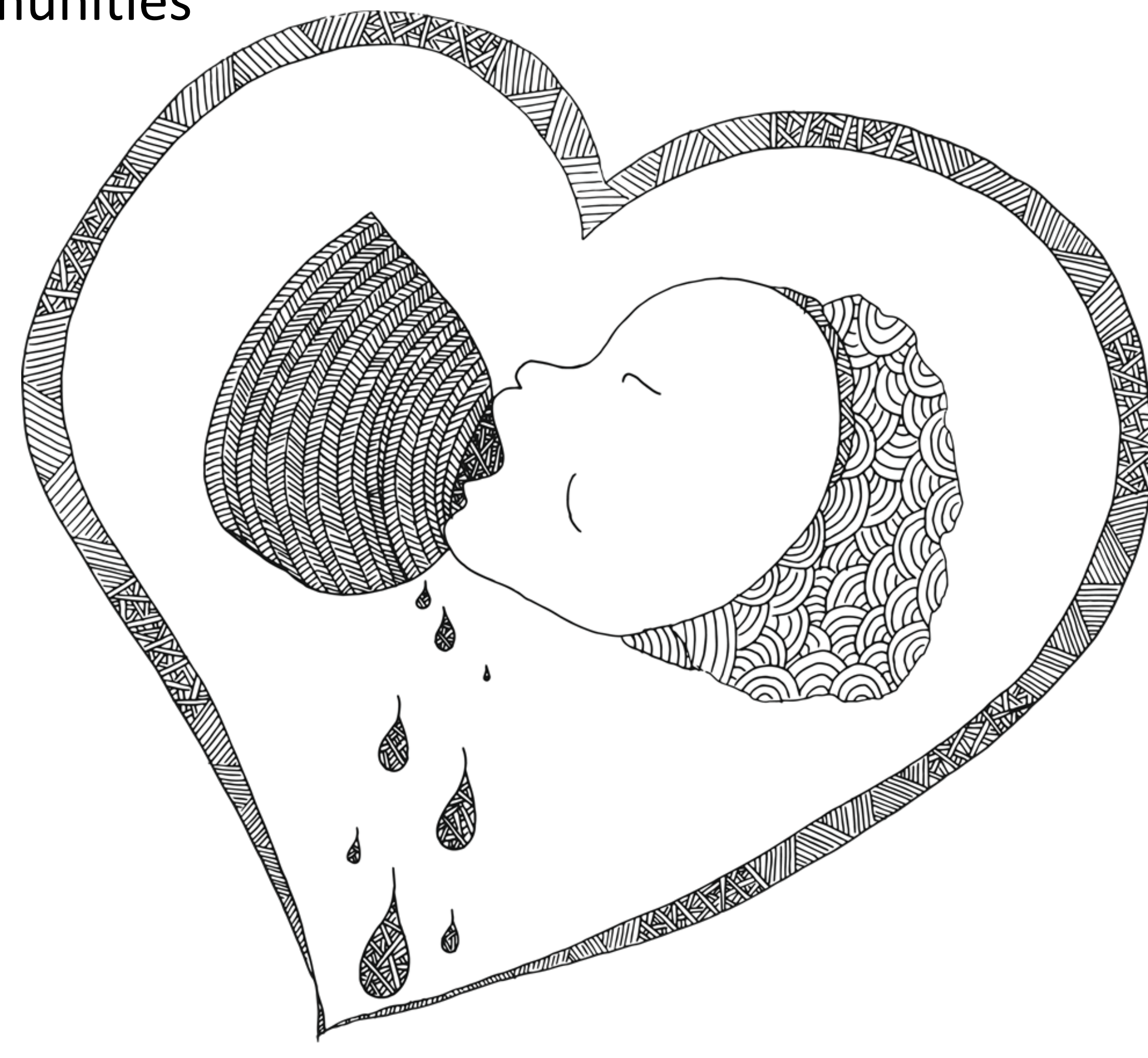


BACKGROUND

- Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended until around 6 months of age ^{1,2}
- Only 7% of Aboriginal infants are exclusively breastfed at 6 months of age³
- Maternal and infant nutrition is a key priority for VACCHO⁴
- Previous research focuses on barriers to breastfeeding, rather than facilitators⁵
- Compiling success stories has been effectively used to promote health in Aboriginal communities⁶

AIM

- To develop the evidence base by identifying and promoting successful strategies used to support and encourage breastfeeding in Victorian Aboriginal communities



“The drawing represents an Aboriginal mother feeding her baby the natural way through breastfeeding. The lines that are in the breast represent the milk coming down into the baby’s mouth. And the milk drops represent the excess amount of milk some women, including myself may have in the first few weeks. After drawing the baby feeding on the mothers breast and milk drops, I looked at my drawing and straightaway I could see the shape of a love heart, which is why I drew this particular shape around the image. I think the heart shape is significant to the feelings I had when I first seen, held and breastfed my baby. I instantly fell in love with him.”

Shakara Montalto, a Gunditjmarra woman from the Western District.

METHOD

- Participants recruited through e-mails and follow-up phone calls
- In-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted, focusing on;
 1. What factors support and encourage breastfeeding?
 2. What key initiatives are present in organizations to support and encourage breastfeeding?
 3. What can be done in the future to support and encourage breastfeeding?
- Transcriptions deductively coded, and thematic and content analysis applied to highlight and quantify 5 key themes
- Success story compiled for each organization or individual

RESULTS

- 21 organizations and 10 individuals interviewed (n=31)
- 5 key themes identified; Role Models, Supportive Environments, Knowledge, Personal Characteristics and Feasibility
- Table 1 shows the proportion of participants who identified, and were addressing, these key themes

Table 1: Proportion of participants mentioning key themes		What factors motivate and encourage breastfeeding?	What are organizations doing to support women to breastfeed?
Role Models		81%	35%
Supportive Environments	Home	77%	16%
	Hospital	35%	13%
	Health Professional	68%	68%
	Society	39%	19%
Knowledge	Individual	55%	74%
	Health Professional	23%	10%
Personal Characteristics		39%	6%
Feasibility		52%	39%



“If they’ve grown up watching mum breastfeed, or sister breastfeed, or aunty breastfeed, then they’re more likely to as well” - Midwife

CONCLUSIONS

- This project highlighted factors that support and encourage breastfeeding for Aboriginal women
- These include role models, supportive environments, knowledge, self-confidence, cost and convenience
- A number of successful strategies are already being undertaken to support and encourage breastfeeding in Victorian Aboriginal communities
- We recommend the following successful strategies are further developed and implemented across Victoria:
 - **Koori-specific breastfeeding resources**
 - **Breastfeeding mentor programs**
 - **Programs which support and include fathers**
 - **Breastfeeding promotion training for the Aboriginal Health Workforce**
 - **Breastfeeding friendly spaces in all health services**
 - **Breastfeeding support and advice through Koori Maternity Services**

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