

Maternity Leave and Breastfeeding Rates MI PRAMS 2012-2014

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Background

- Breastfeeding provides many health benefits to both mother and baby.¹
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that mothers breastfeed their newborns for 6 months.
- Without adequate workplace maternity leave, mothers may be less likely to breastfeed for a total of 6 months.

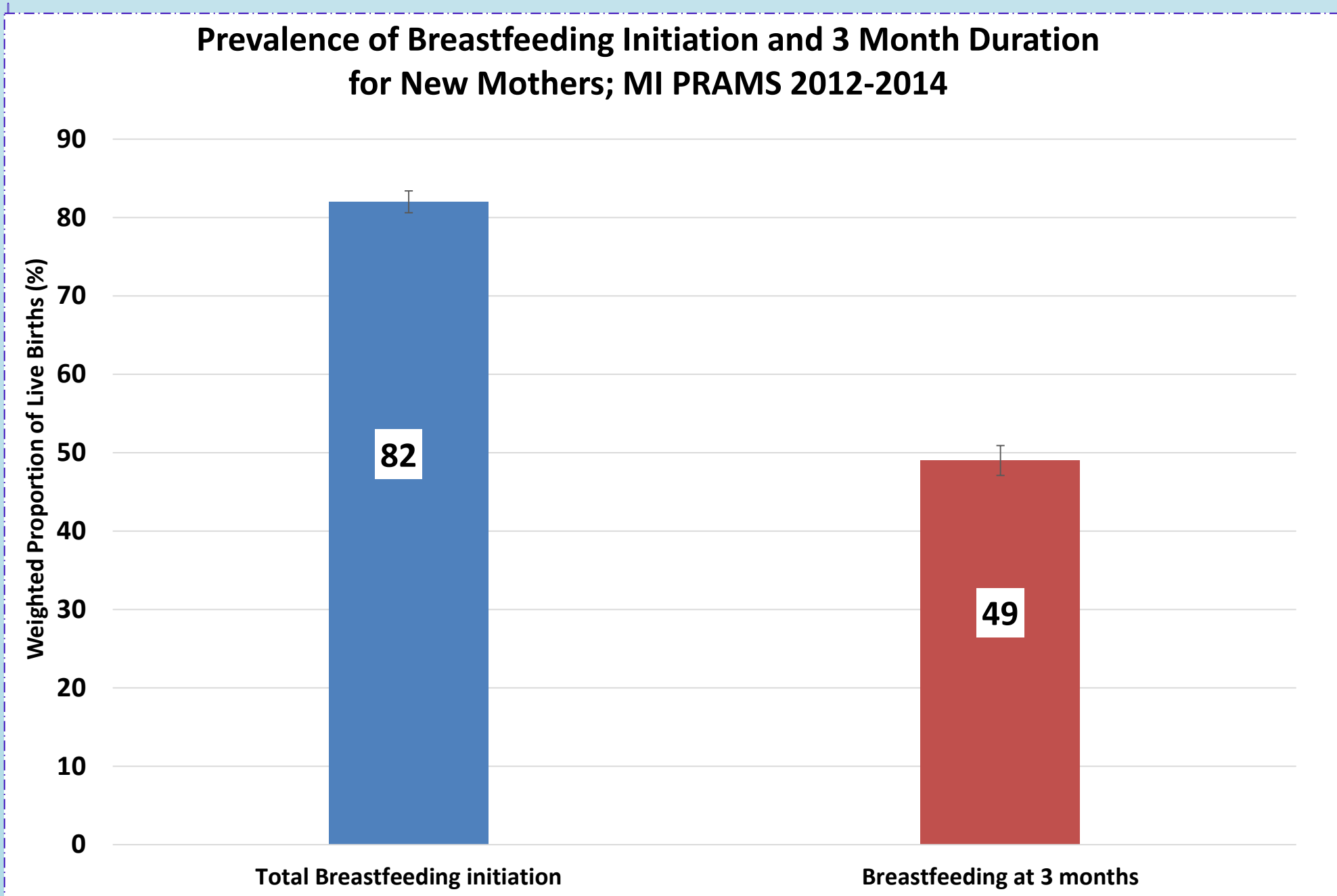


Figure 1: Average Breastfeeding initiation in the state of Michigan.

Methods

- Michigan PRAMS (Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System) surveys about 2000 new mothers in Michigan annually.
- Mothers are selected at random through the Department of Vital Records.
- Michigan PRAMS asks if mothers initiated breastfeeding and if they continue through 3 months.
- Mothers also were asked to report whether they worked at a job for pay during pregnancy, if they took maternity leave, and what type of leave they had.
- The mothers responses are weighted and used to provide an estimate for all mothers within the state of Michigan.
- The average proportion of mothers who initiated breastfeeding and continued for three months are shown in Figure 1.

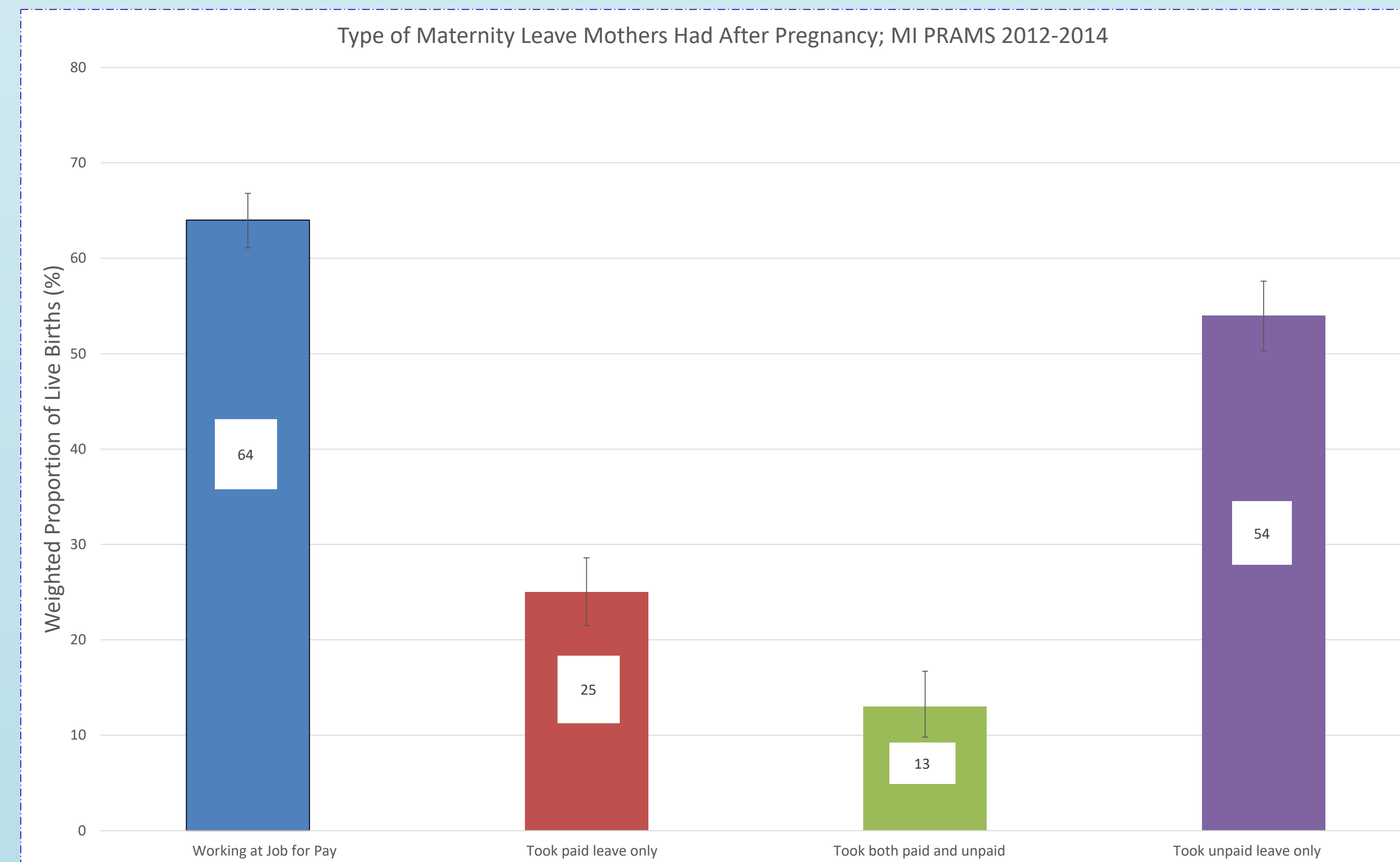


Figure 2: The amount of mothers working at a job for pay, as well as what type of leave those mothers took.

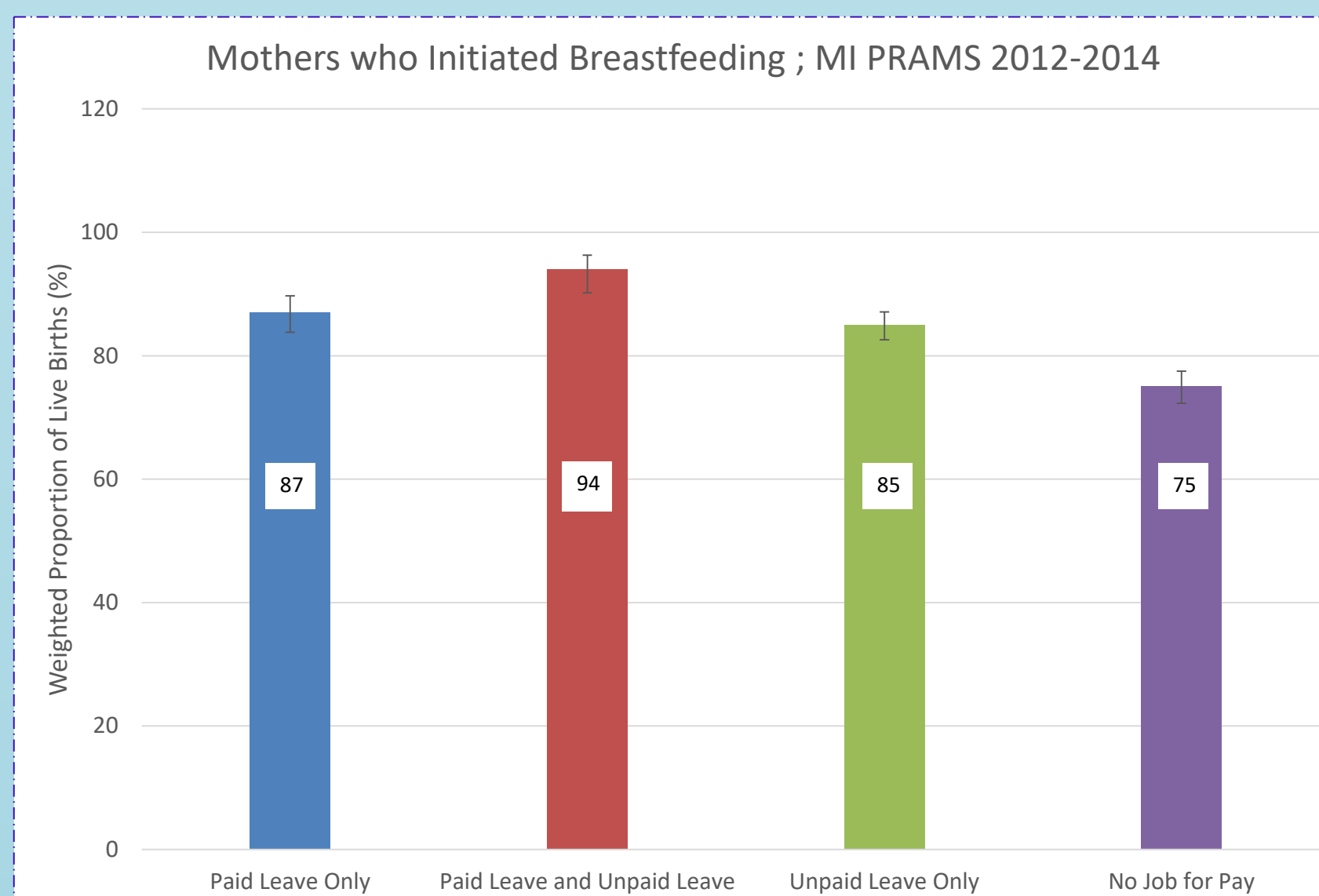


Figure 3: The graph to the left shows the initiation rates of mothers organized by type of leave that was taken.

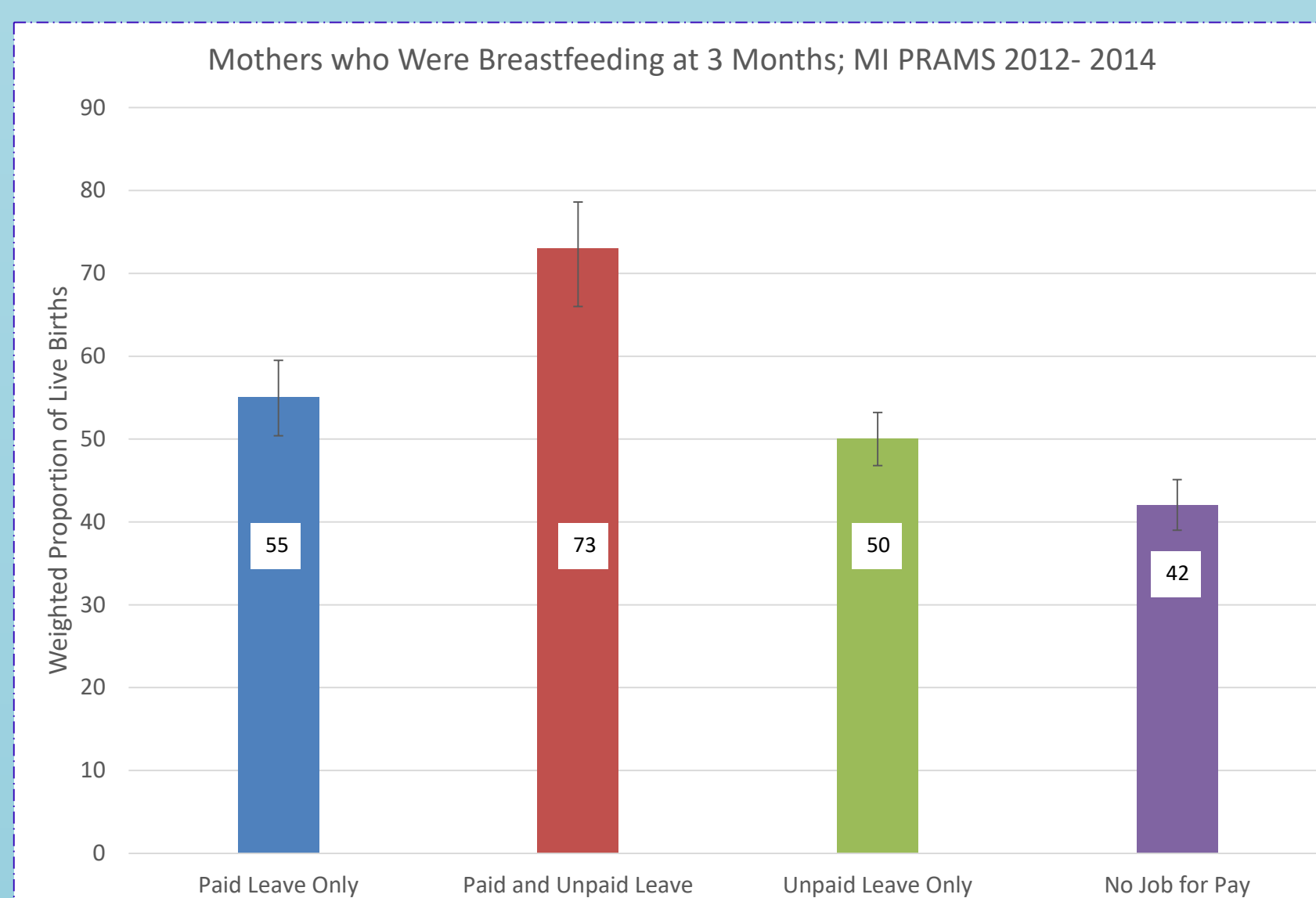


Figure 4: The graph to the left shows how many mothers were still breastfeeding at three months organized by the type of leave that was taken.

Results

- Between 2012-2014 the average initiation rate for breastfeeding was 82%.
- When maternity leave is taken into effect, no matter what type of leave, it is shown in figure 3 that breastfeeding initiation rates are higher than the state average.
- Mothers who have the ability to take a combination of both paid and unpaid leave had the best breastfeeding initiation as well as continuing to at least 3 months.
- Mothers who only had the opportunity to take unpaid leave had higher initiation rates than the state average however, only a slight increase above that state average in mothers still breastfeeding at 3 months.
- Mothers who did not work a job for had both the lowest initiation and continuing to at least 3 months at 75% and 42% respectively.
- There are similar trends in initiation rates and duration rates in regards to their respective leave categories.

Conclusions

- Any type of leave will help increase breastfeeding rates as well as incline mothers to breastfeed for a longer duration.
- Paid and unpaid leave mothers have similar initiation rates but different rates at 3 months implying that pay could play a role in improving the amount of time mothers will breastfeed.
- Mothers who had no job for pay had the worst rates which means that these mothers have other concerns that needed attention.
 - Looking for a job, taking care of other family members, looking after other children, etc.
- The state of Michigan should work on improving the amount of time mothers breastfeed their newborn babies.

Reference

1. Wall, Gina. "Outcomes of Breastfeeding Versus Formula Feeding." Washing.edu/nutr526 University of Washington, N/A, June 2001.