Turkish women’s attitudes and views regarding human milk banking

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The purpose of this study is to identify the attitudes and views of Turkish women with regard to Human Milk Bank (HMB). This study was conducted in primary healthcare centers located in Istanbul and uses a population-based, descriptive method. The participants included 1055 volunteer women who had at least one child. The participants were interviewed in person by the researcher in their homes. Of all participants, 62.8% heard about HMB. However, 63.8% of them stated they would not donate their milk to a baby in an intensive care unit while breastfeeding their own child. In addition, 78.6% stated they would not receive support from a human milk bank for their own baby for any reason. The most important issue related to HMB, as stated by 46.8% of the participants, is that it conflicts with that Islamic beliefs (babies are believed to become milk siblings). As a result, 57.2% of the participants think that HMB would not be approved in Turkey. Human milk banks being accepted by Muslim societies is much different from western societies. The most important step to be taken is to inform and help families resolve their worries regarding “milk sibling marriages”. To establish human milk banks in Muslim countries, we need to ensure that the mothers’ milk will not be mixed and also develop a model where both donor and recipient can exchange information about each other.

Biography
Merve Kadioglu is a PhD student at Istanbul University. She is also working as a Research Assistant at the same university in Women Health and Illnesses, Nursing Department since 2012.

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