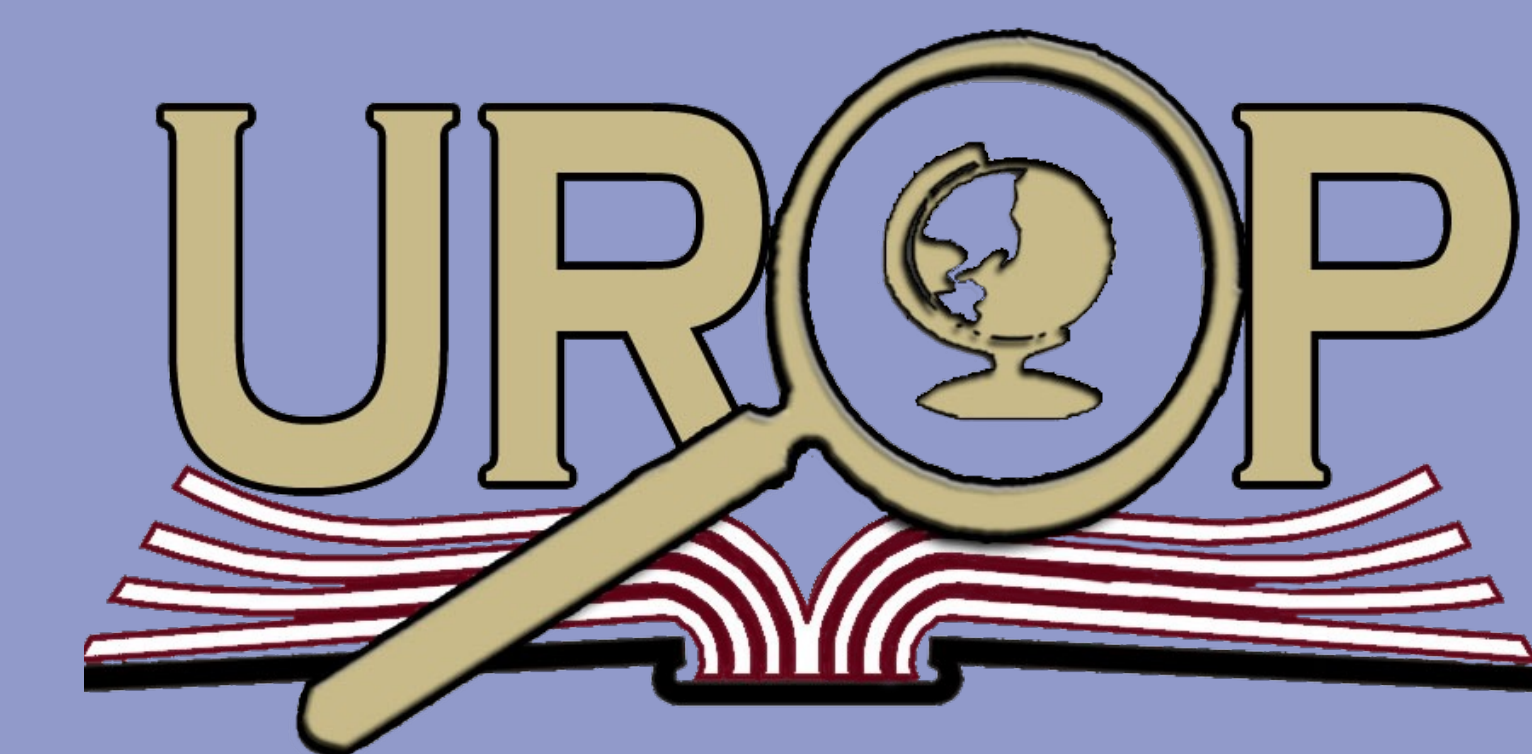




Analyzing the Factors that Affect Body Image and Breastfeeding in Postpartum Mothers

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Introduction

The postpartum period is a difficult time for mothers, especially when it comes to taking care of themselves and their newborns. During this time, many mothers find themselves feeling depressed and unhappy with the way they look. Improving body image for postpartum mothers may result in improved maternal-child outcomes. For example, research has shown that mothers with a higher body-mass-index score (BMI) have decreased breastfeeding duration. It is plausible that improved body image perception may increase breastfeeding duration in women with obesity.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine whether a correlation between body image and depression or BMI exists. Additionally, the association between BMI and breastfeeding was explored.

Methods

- Mothers (N=47) ages 18-40 years who had a baby in the past 6 months and live in the Tallahassee or Gainesville areas are being recruited.
- Quantitative data will be collected from the mothers via the REDCap survey tool
- These measurements were used for the following analyses:
 - Breastfeeding (Y/N) at time of survey completion
 - BMI calculated from mothers self reported height and weight
 - Body image as measured by the Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ)
 - Depression as measured by the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)

Results

	M ± SD	Range
Maternal Age (years) [#]	31.16 ± 5.37	21-40
Maternal BMI post preg [*]	28.96 ± 7.32	12.49 – 49.99
BSQ Total [†]	22.84 ± 9.02	8-48
EPDS [‡]	9.67 ± 5.17	0 – 23
Marital Status (married) [*]	43	91.5%
Race [*]		
White	28	60.9%
Black	11	23.9%
Other/Mixed	7	15.2%
Hispanic, yes	12	25.5%
Current breastfeeding (yes) [*]	37	80.4%

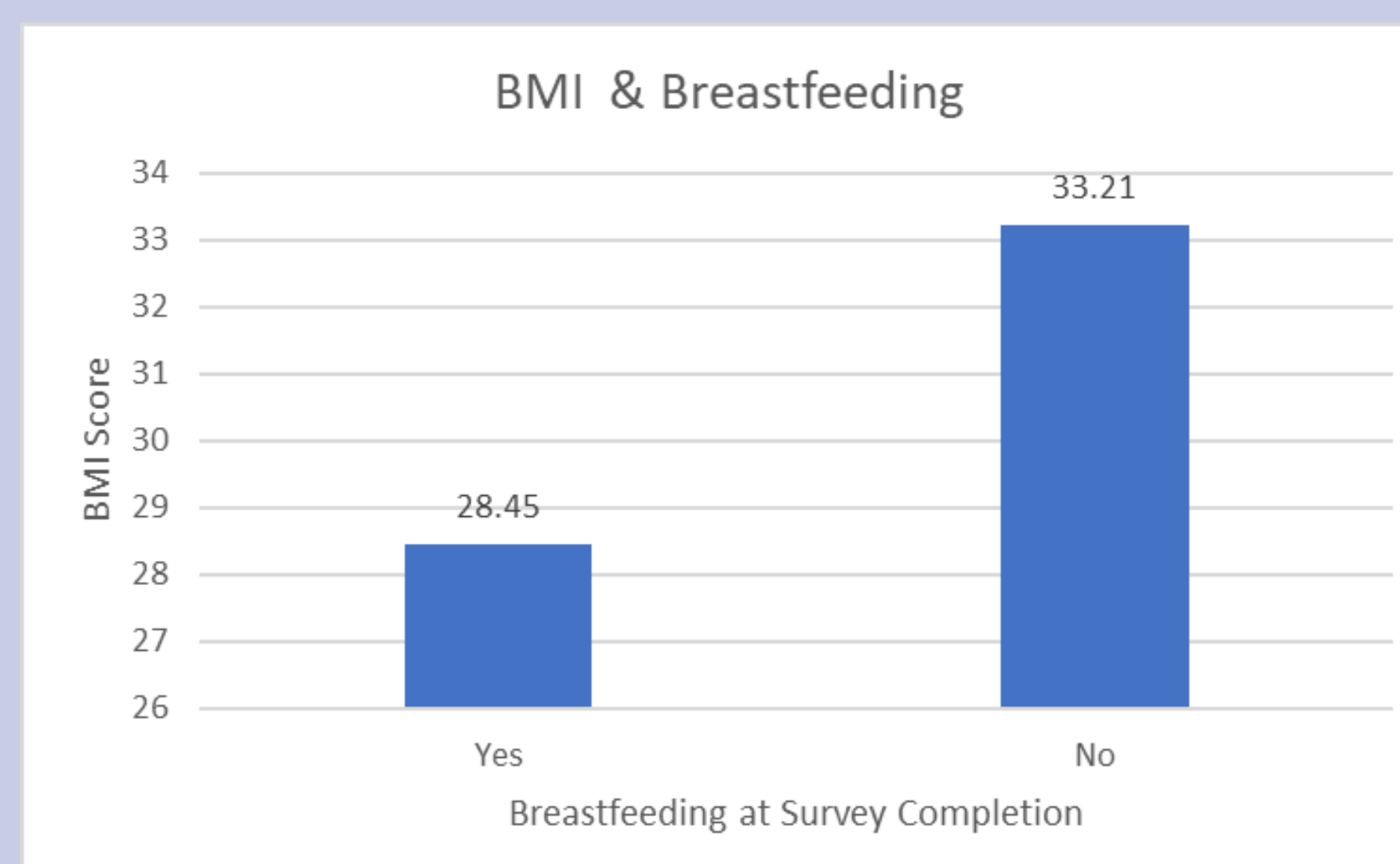


Figure 1. $p = 0.068$, Wilcoxon statistical test was used.

Note. An outlier for BMI was removed

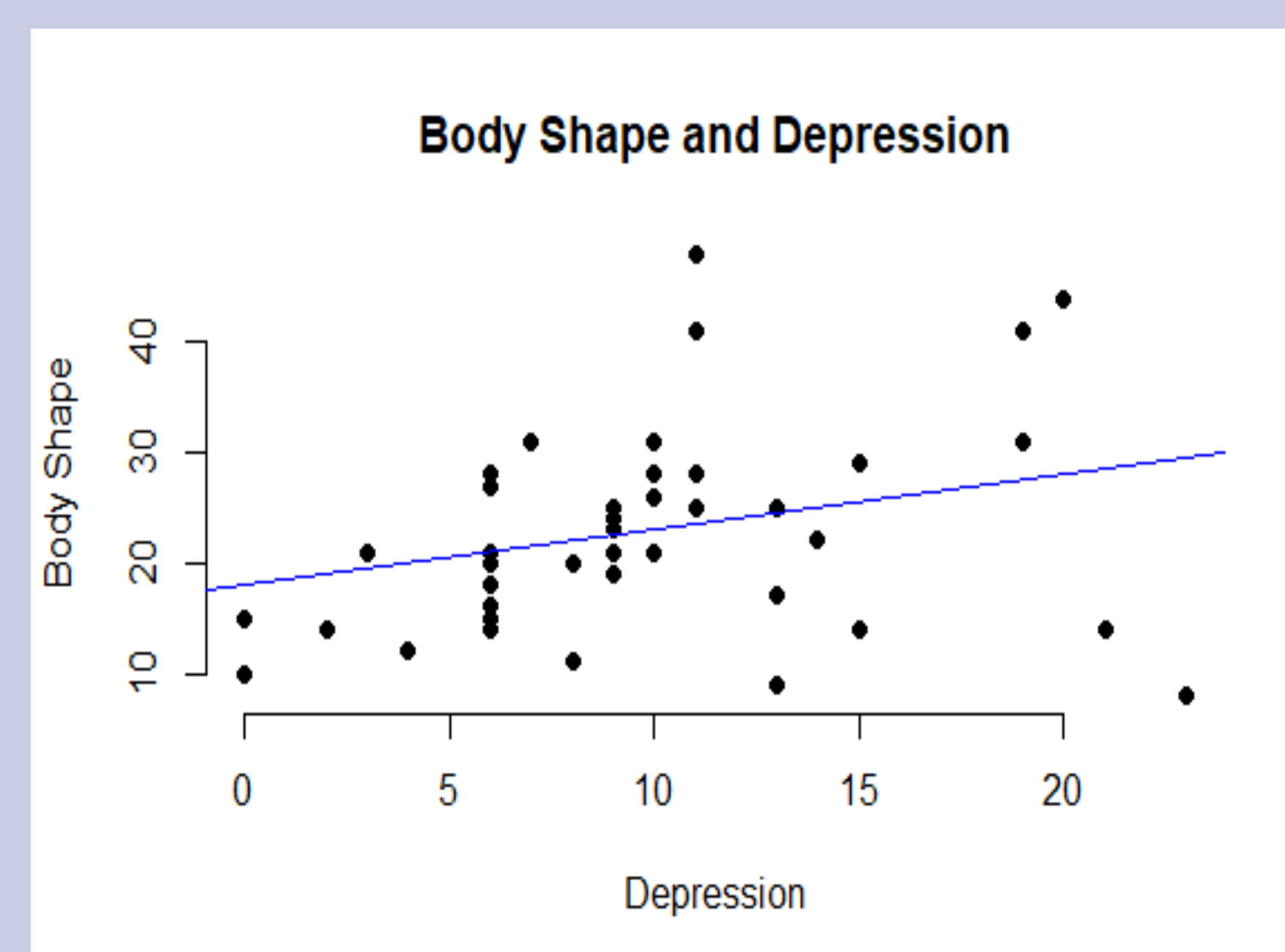


Figure 2. Positive correlation, $p = 0.027$, $r = 0.33$ (small to medium effect size), Spearman correlation test was used.

Classification	Number	Percentage %
Underweight	1	2.2%
Healthy Weight	15	32.6%
Overweight	14	30.4%
Obese	16	34.8%

Classification	Number	Percentage %
Depression Not Likely	16	37.2%
Depression Possible	16	37.2%
Fairly High Possibility of Depression	3	7.0%
Probable Depression	8	18.6%

Classification	Number	Percentage %
No Concern	14	31.1%
Mild Concern	15	33.2%
Moderate Concern	12	26.6%
Marked Concern	4	8.9%

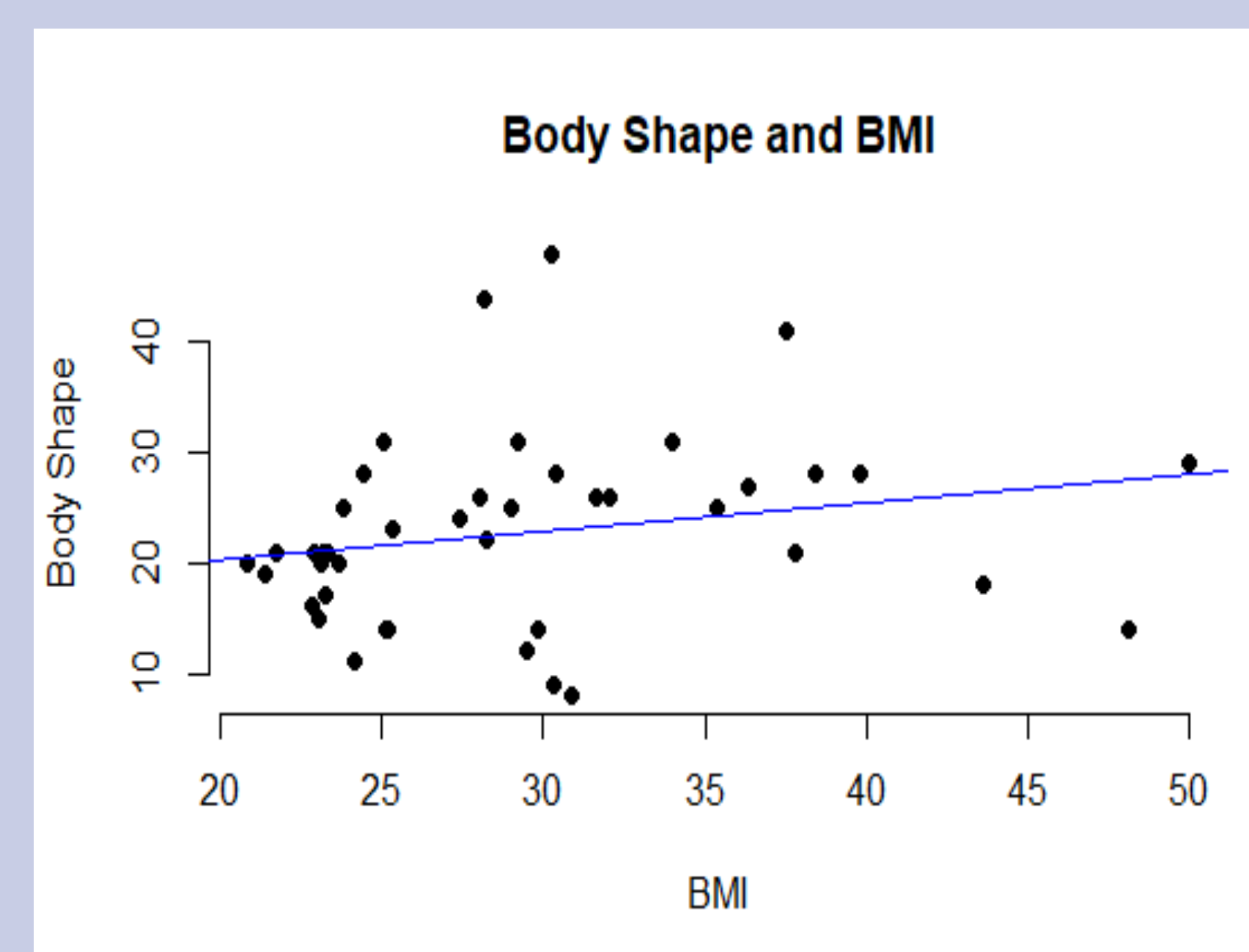


Figure 2. Positive correlation, $p = 0.096$, $r = 0.25$ (small effect size), Spearman correlation test was used.

Note. An outlier for BMI was removed.

Conclusions

- Our results show that mothers who have a higher BMI tend to stop breastfeeding earlier than mothers who have a lower BMI.
- Lower body image may cause depression or depression may cause a lower body image
- Lower body image may result in higher BMI or higher BMI may result in a lower body image.
- More research is needed to further study how body image and depression intertwine with one another.
- Future directions: data collection is ongoing with a goal of recruiting 100 mothers.
- One limitation we faced was having a small sample size, but data collection is still ongoing with a goal of 100 participants.
- Another limitation is the homogeneity of the sample size, most of them being white, married, and well educated, thus findings cannot be applied to other populations.

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