

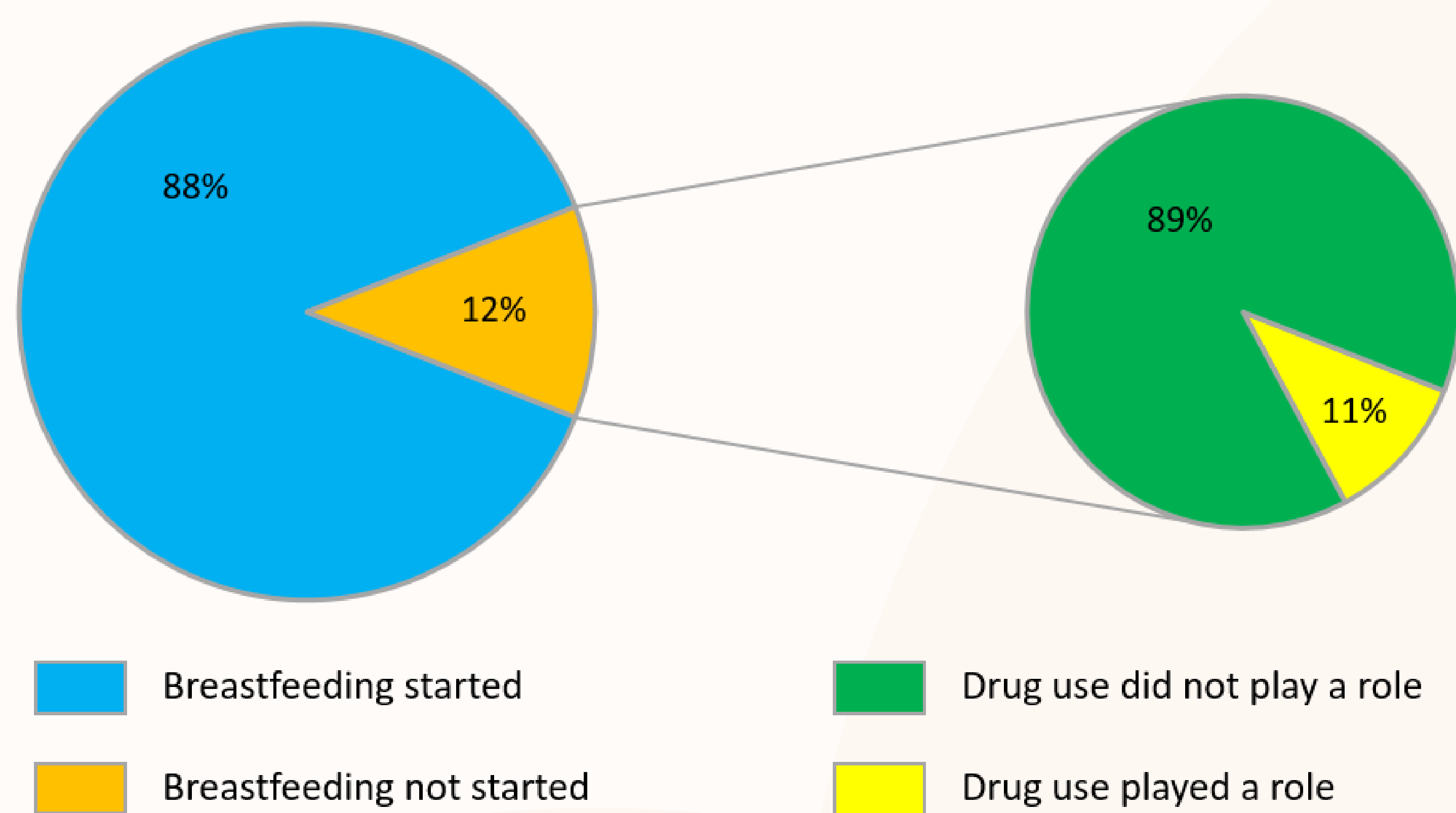
# Chronic medication and breastfeeding, avoiding behavior in Dutch women

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## Breastfeeding, yes or no?

Most young mothers start breastfeeding their newborn child. We focused on those mothers who did **not**. How many of them made this decision out of concerns about the safety of their medication? And was their decision justified? Data were obtained from the Dutch Pregnancy Drug Register.



About 12% of Dutch participating women decided not to start breastfeeding, within this group about 11% (n=57) described medication as the reason.

## A valid choice?

### Lithium

None of the women on lithium started breastfeeding. This combination is indeed not recommended.

### Lamotrigine

Almost 40% of the women taking lamotrigine (5 out of 13) did not start breastfeeding due to concern about the medication. Unnecessary, because women with epilepsy taking lamotrigine chronically are generally recommended to start breastfeeding.

### SSRI: fluoxetine

Fluoxetine was the SSRI least trusted: none of the fluoxetine using moms started breastfeeding. Indeed, fluoxetine is the least favorite SSRI, due to relatively large amounts entering the milk. However, women who were already on fluoxetine during pregnancy can continue its use while breastfeeding.

### Other SSRIs: sertraline, escitalopram, citalopram

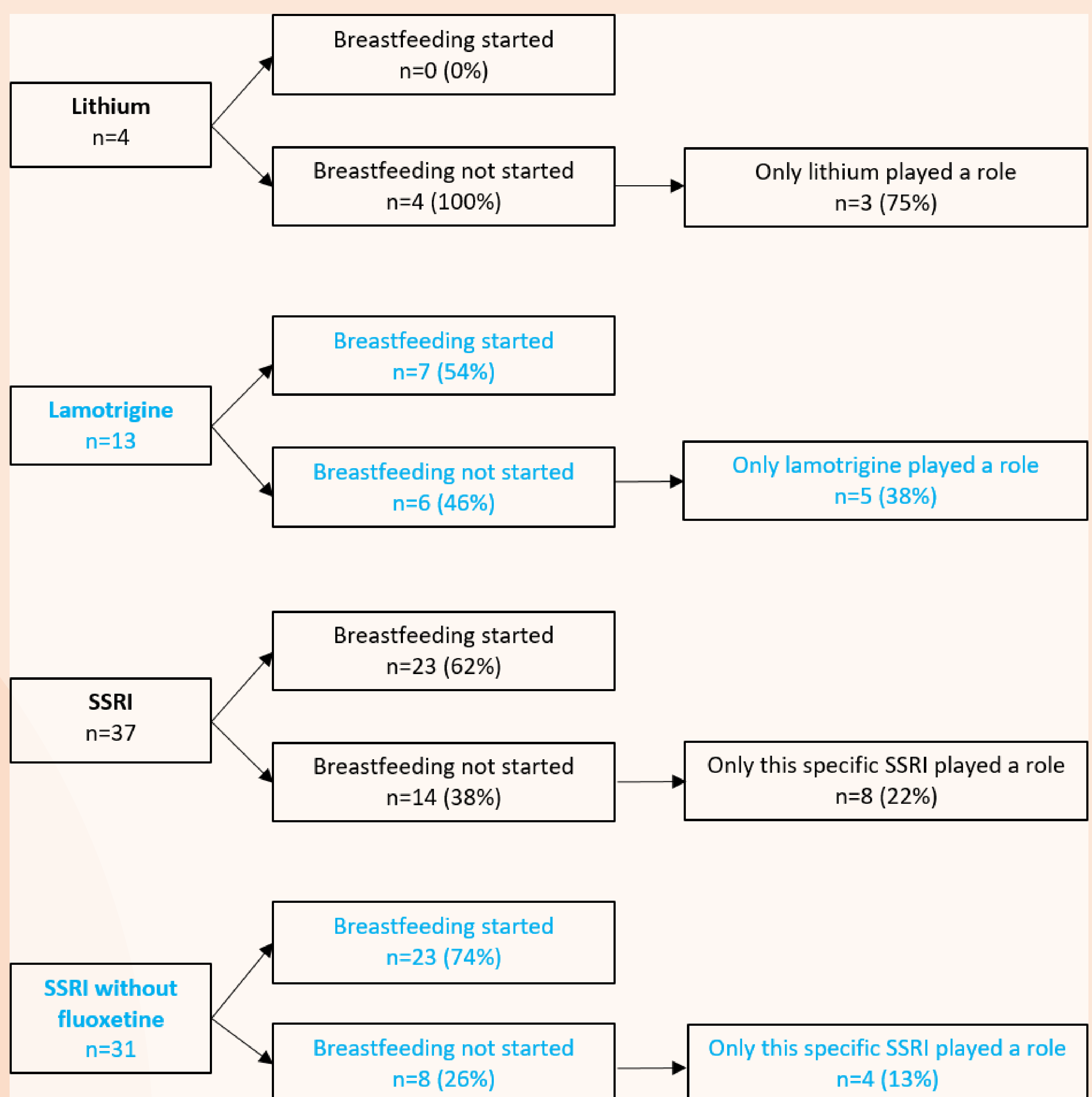
Excluding fluoxetine increased the percentage of women who started breastfeeding. However, still 23% (4 out of 31) of the women using another SSRI decided not to start due to unnecessary concern about the medication.

## Single drugs mentioned

The single drugs (groups) that were most often mentioned as a reason not to start breastfeeding were:

- lithium,
- lamotrigine
- one of the SSRIs

These drugs were used for chronic diseases. In a second analysis we included all women in the Register who were on this medication. It enabled us to determine the percentage of women who made the opposite decision and **did** start breastfeeding.



Number and percentage of women who did **not** start breastfeeding, compared to those who **did**, for the drugs most often mentioned.

## Conclusion

The use of a medication like lamotrigine or an SSRI is no reason to refrain from breastfeeding. With better drug safety information, for both healthcare provider and pregnant women, we hope to improve this situation.