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GRANADA, Spain, May 12 (UPI) — A study of breastfeeding mothers in Spain found 94 percent of mothers did not follow a proper diet, researchers said.

Study leader Jose Luis Gomez Llorente of the University of Granada and colleagues found the breastfeeding mothers ate too much protein — probably due to their high [fish](#) intake — and not enough vitamins A, E and iron.

The researchers collected 100 milk samples from 34 breastfeeding mothers from the provinces of Granada and Almeria in Spain. The mothers completed a questionnaire on what they ate three days before the sample of breast milk was taken.

Ninety-four percent of mothers consumed a hypocaloric diet — a low number of dietary calories usually 1,000–1,200 calories — mainly due to low [consumption](#) of fat.

The same number — 94 percent — ate a diet rich in proteins exceeding recommended Dietary Reference Intakes.

The study also found 88 percent of the breastfeeding mothers showed a deficiency of vitamin A, 99 percent were deficient vitamin E and 94 percent were deficient in iron.

These micronutrients are essential for the neurological development of infants, the researcher said.

“Breastfeeding mothers can significantly improve the composition of their milk by optimizing their diet by following international recommendations,” the study said.