

Trends in Public Concern Surrounding 2022 Infant Formula Shortage



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INTRODUCTION

- In 2022 the Food and Drug Administration investigated Abbott Nutrition, a producer of approximately one-third of the United States' baby formula (Cunningham, n.d.)
- A report of a third and fourth Cronobacter case of death potentially associated with their products
- FDA recommended that Abbott Nutrition voluntarily recall their product, leading to a voluntary cease in production
- Russia invasion of Ukraine additionally contributed to supply chain uncertainty as Ukraine served as a major exporter of infant formula ingredients including sunflower oil (*Timeline of Infant Formula Related Activities*, n.d.)
- FDA worked to increase imports of baby formula to put more formula on the shelf in June 2022

OBJECTIVES

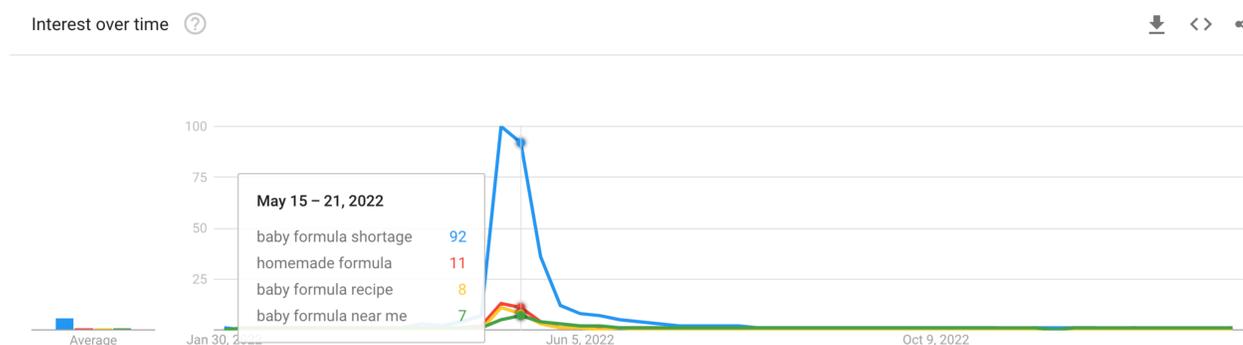
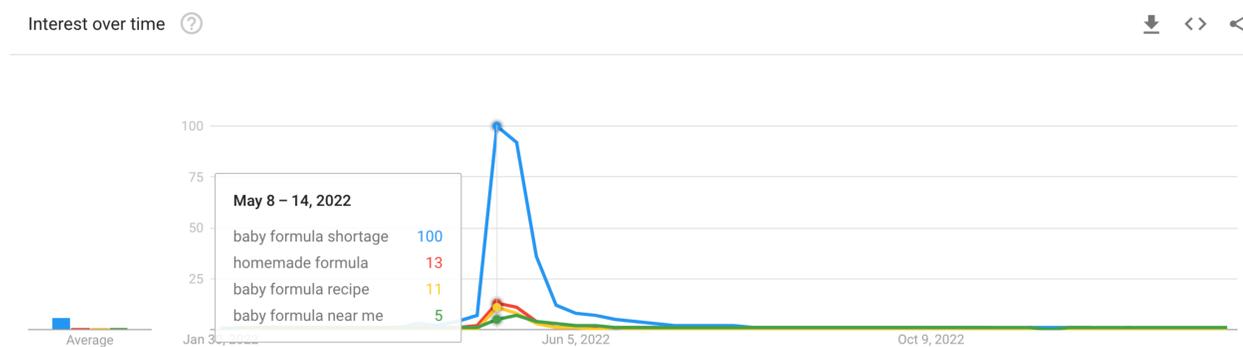
- To better understand public concern by examining Google Trends data surrounding the 2022 United States infant formula shortage

METHODS

- Dates, news articles, recommendations and findings from the FDA and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) surrounding the infant formula shortage were researched
- Using Google Trends to collect data, we entered various key words found from our research that included "baby formula near me", "baby formula shortage", "homemade formula", and "baby formula recipe"
- Parameters we set were to show searches done in the United States and occurring over the previous 12 months from January 2022 to January 2023
- The results from the key word searches were put onto one line graph to compare the timelines of the search volume
- The times of peak interest/max number of searches were compared to the AAP/FDA recommendations and findings

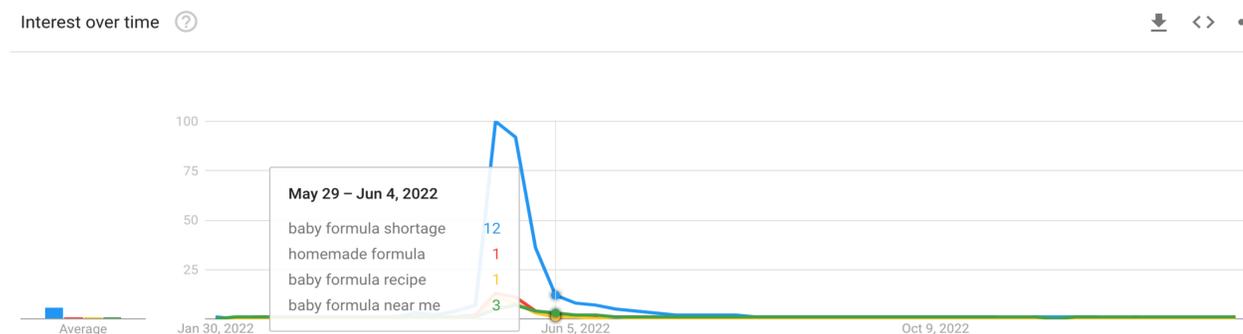
RESULTS

Times of Peak Key Word Search Interest



All searches showed a peak interest from May 8th to May 21st. "Baby formula shortage" had the highest search interest. "Homemade formula", "baby formula recipe", and "baby formula near me" at their peak interest had 13%, 11%, and 7% of the searches that "baby formula shortage" had, respectively.

Times of Key Word Search Interest Decline



For all four searches, the interest dropped drastically from May 21st to June 4th. "Baby formula shortage" searches decreased to 12% of its peak interest going into June and was at 4% of its peak interest going into July

CONCLUSION

- Infant formula shortages spiked to over 74% nationwide at the end of May 2022 (Laura Stilwell & Lisa A. Gennetian, 2022)
- Our results suggest that the highest search volumes for baby formula and how to make homemade formula corresponded to the dates when the infant formula supply shortage was spiking nationwide
- Beginning June of 2022, our results showed a decrease in the searches which corresponds to the increase of formula on store shelves

FUTURE DIRECTION

- We hope to research how the infant formula shortage could have affected infant health and to look at the outcomes of using different homemade recipes for formula

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