

PREVALENCE OF BREASTFEEDING AT THE FIRST YEAR OF LIFE: MAIN CAUSES OF ABANDONMENT

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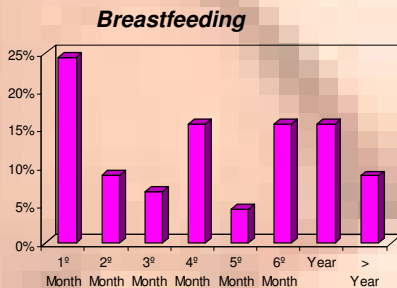
Breastfeeding is a practice that, in spite of the countless benefits, still fails to reach the values pretended by UNICEF/WHO. The studies "in Portugal point to a high incidence of breastfeeding at birth but a low prevalence starting from the month and a half of life, which makes it necessary to identify the decisive factors of success and implementation of appropriate interventions" (D'Almeida, 1998:325). A study of Direção Geral da Saúde - DGS (1995) refers that 95% of the mothers leave the maternity unit breastfeeding their child. Still, in spite of a strong initial adherence to breastfeeding, it is verified that by end of the first month the rates fall abruptly, thus being its promotion highly considered as a human right, by WHO; as a right of the child and as a right of the woman (UNICEF/WHO, 1996).

Researches point that the main factors of precocious breastfeeding abandonment can be classified as incidental (flat nipples, fissures, etc.) and as cultural difficulties (Issler, 1987).

Objectives

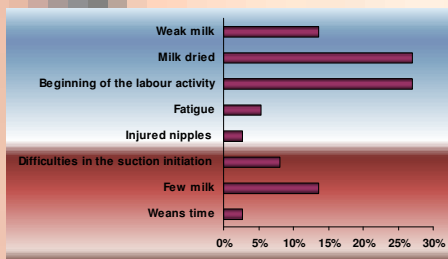
- Identify the prevalence of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding
- Identify the main causes of abandonment
- Identify the difficulties felt

Results



Concerning the prevalence of breastfeeding, we verified that 24,4% of the women participants in the study ceased breastfeeding until the first month of life, 75,6% still breastfeed after the first month, 15,6% ceased at the fourth month, and 15,6% ceased at the sixth month, only 8,8% of the sample breastfeed after the first year

Causes of abandonment

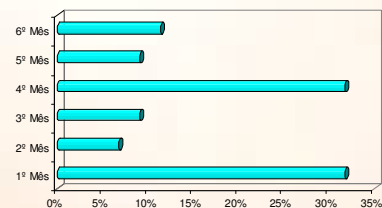


The main causes of abandonment referred to were: "the milk dried" and "I went to work" in 27% of the cases, and "few milk" and "weak milk" in 14% of the cases

Methodology

Descriptive and exploratory study, in the domain of the social sciences. The sample comprises 45 women, mothers more than one year ago. All participants accepted to participate in this study. Data was collected between January and February 2005, with semi-structured interviews carried out by telephone

Exclusive breastfeeding



We verified that 31,8% of the women exclusively breastfeed at the first month. More than half ceased exclusively breastfeeding until the fourth month of life

Conclusion

Relatively to the prevalence of the breastfeeding, the obtained results, although a little inferior to the mentioned in the literature, are in accordance with this one, which indicates us that only 50% of the mothers breastfeed longer than three months (D'Almeida, 1998, OMS/ UNICEF, 1996).

The referred difficulties and the causes of abandonment are also found in literature (Sardo et al, 2005), which refers precisely that the main causes of abandonment are the problems with the breast, nipple and difficulties in the suction initiation and the beginning of the labour activity.

We consider, therefore, that nurses must get themselves implied in the process of promotion, support and maintenance of breastfeeding, in order to effectively support women, giving feedback to its doubts and efficiently eliminating the detected problems, in a way that will contribute to increase the prevalence both of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding

Bibliography

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