

FACTORS AFFECTING EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS IN KOREA

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Objective: To identify the current status of exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) in Korea and analyze the factors affecting exclusive breastfeeding at six months of age.

Method: This study was based on the data obtained from the Korea National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (KNHANES) IV conducted from January 2007 to December 2008. A total 404 mother-infant pairs were recruited. In this study, exclusive breastfeeding was defined according to the criteria set forth by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Result: The rate of EBF was 60.9% for one month, 55.0% for three months, 35.4% for six months, 3.7% for nine months and 1.2% for twelve months after birth. According to a stepwise logistic regression analysis, factors that were positively associated with EBF at six months were: younger maternal age (OR=0.85, 95% CI 0.79-0.92), higher maternal education level (OR=2.29, 95% CI 1.17-4.46) and living in a capital area (OR=2.64, 95% CI 1.46-4.75).

Conclusion: The rate of EBF in Korea is still suboptimal. To promote EBF, persistent and systematic education and campaigns regarding breastfeeding should be provided, particularly in vulnerable areas.