

July 26-27, 2018
Amsterdam, NetherlandsShiran Pinchevski-Kadir et al., Ped Health Res 2018, Volume: 3
DOI: 10.21767/2574-2817-C1-005

DIRECT FEEDING AT THE BREAST IS ASSOCIATED WITH BREAST MILK FEEDING DURATION AMONG PRETERM INFANTS

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Background: In spite of high rates of initiating breast milk feeding (BMF), a significant rate of discontinuation occurs shortly after discharge among preterm infants (PI). Therefore, we aimed to investigate the effect of mode and exclusivity as well as maternal perceptions on the duration of BMF among mothers of PI.

Methods: The study included mothers whose infants were born <32 weeks gestation at Sheba medical center. Perinatal data were collected retrospectively from infants' computerized charts. Mothers were approached >12 months postpartum with a follow-up questionnaire regarding mode and duration of BMF, pre-partum intentions to feed directly at the breast as well as reasons for its discontinuation.

Results: Out of 162 eligible mothers, 131 (80.8%) initiated BMF during their intensive care unit hospitalization. Of these, 66 (50.3%) discontinued BMF at < than six months postpartum. Direct feeding at the breast, duration of exclusive BMF and singleton birth were significantly associated with BMF ≥6 months. Regression analysis revealed that the only significant variables associated with BMF duration were direct feeding at the breast and duration of BMF exclusivity. The most commonly reported cause for BMF discontinuation <6 months was inadequate milk supply. Direct feeding at the breast was significantly associated with BMF duration and was more common among singletons.

Conclusions: Direct feeding at the breast and exclusive BMF are associated with duration of BMF among PI born <32 weeks. These findings suggest that targeting these two factors may play a key role in prolonging BMF duration among preterm infants.

Biography

Shiran Pinchevski-Kadir has completed her MD Tel Aviv University and is currently pursuing her Residency as a Paediatrician at Sheba Medical centre. She is an enthusiastic Doctor and Researcher and has published 3 papers in reputed journals.

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