

Obstetrics

The influence of social support on the duration of breast-feeding among antenatal patients in Ibadan

O. Olayemi, C. O. Aimakhu, F. A. Bello, V. O. Motayo, A. A. Ogunleye, O. W. Odunukan & show all

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Summary

In Nigeria, breast-feeding has been shown to be very closely related to infant survival. Prolonged and adequate breast-feeding is critical to most infants' nutritional health and growth. This study aims to determine the influence of family support on the duration of exclusive and total breast-feeding of infants of antenatal patients. This cross-sectional study was conducted between 1 September and 30 December 2005. The tool was a structured questionnaire. The main outcome variables were the duration of breast-feeding; both total and exclusive explanatory variables were mainly related to support obtained during breast-feeding from husband and older female relations. Husbands support significantly increased the total duration of breast-feeding by a mean of 1.69 months (95% CI 0.88, 2.51), however, exclusive breast-feeding was not significantly affected by the husband's support (OR 0.94; 95% CI 0.63, 1.39). Female support had a significant influence on both the total duration of breast-feeding which is increased by a mean of 1.08 months (95% CI 0.14, 2.02), and the adequate conduct of exclusive breast-feeding (OR 1.83; 95% CI 1.17, 2.86). The cultural practice of having additional female support in the postpartum period has been shown by this study to be beneficial. Therefore, this cultural practice should be encouraged and catalogued as a beneficial cultural practice. This practice is also cheap and sustainable.

Keywords: Breast-feeding, HIV, husband, social support