



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Weaning practices of mothers in eastern Turkey[☆]Nazan Gürarlan Baş^{a,*}, Gülnaz Karatay^a, Duygu Arıkan^b^a Munzur University, School of Health Science, Tunceli, Turkey^b Atatürk University, Nursing Faculty, Erzurum, Turkey

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KEYWORDS

Children;
Nursing;
Weaning

Abstract

Objective: The study aimed to determine the practices used by breastfeeding mothers to wean their children from the breast.

Method: This qualitative–quantitative research was conducted with mothers whose children were registered the pediatric clinics of a state hospital between June and September 2016. In accordance with a purposeful sampling method, 232 mothers of children between the ages of 2 and 5 years were included in the study. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews using a questionnaire with demographic characteristics of mothers as well as their weaning practices. The data obtained were analyzed with a computer-assisted program using number and percentage distributions.

Results: The mean breastfeeding duration was 19.00 ± 7.11 months. It was determined that the majority of mothers (56.5%) used traditional methods for weaning their children. These included applying substances with a bad taste (58.1%) to their breasts, covering their breasts with various materials (26.2%) to make the child not want to nurse anymore, and using a pacifier or feeding bottle (9.2%) to substitute for the mother's breast.

Conclusions: It was observed that more than half of the mothers were used some traditional practices that could cause trauma in their children, instead of natural weaning.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Crianças;
Enfermagem;
Desmame

Práticas maternas de desmame no leste da Turquia

Resumo

Objetivo: O estudo visou determinar as práticas utilizadas por mães em amamentação para desmamar seus filhos do peito.

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Método: Essa pesquisa qualitativa-quantitativa foi realizada com mães cujos filhos foram registrados em clínicas pediátricas de um hospital estadual entre junho-setembro de 2016. De acordo com o método de amostragem proposital, 232 mães de crianças com idades entre 2 e 5 anos foram incluídas no estudo. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevistas presenciais que utilizam um questionário com características demográficas das mães, bem como suas práticas de desmame. Os dados obtidos foram analisados com um programa de computador que utiliza distribuições numéricas e percentuais.

Resultados: A duração média de amamentação foi $19,00 \pm 7,11$ meses. Foi determinado que a maior parte das mães (56,5%) utilizou métodos tradicionais para desmamar seus filhos. Esses métodos incluíram aplicar substâncias com gosto ruim (58,1%) em seus seios, cobrir seus seios com materiais diversos (26,2%) para fazer com que seu filho deixe de querer mamar e utilizar chupeta ou mamadeira (9,2%) para substituir o peito da mãe.

Conclusões: Foi observado que mais da metade das mães estavam utilizando algumas práticas tradicionais que podem causar trauma em seus filhos, em vez do desmame natural.

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Introduction

Mother's milk is an essential nutrient that meets the basic nutritional needs of the baby.^{1,2} As a cultural phenomenon with social and spiritual dimensions, breastfeeding supports psychosocial development through the mother–infant bond, while meeting the physiological requirements of the baby.^{3,4} For these reasons, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends breastfeeding for two years or longer, using only breastmilk for the first six months after birth and thereafter with additional nutrients.⁵ However, 49% of infants born in 2011 were breastfed at the age of 6 months and 27% at 12 months.⁶ The mean duration of breastfeeding is longer in countries with low levels of income than in those with higher levels of income.⁷

Many factors affect the breastfeeding behaviors of mothers. Studies show the presence of a relationship between weaning and factors such as age of the mother,^{8,9} employment status, breastfeeding problems,^{8,10} mother's health problems,¹¹ place of residence, and socioeconomic status,¹² pregnancy,⁸ early food introduction, and the inability to get support for breastfeeding.^{2,9,13} A review of the practices of mothers and the weaning process indicates that this topic has not been adequately studied. Moreover, few studies have reported the use of traditional weaning practices.^{14,15} Traditional practices aim to terminate breastfeeding quickly. However, a review of the literature showed that the benefits and disadvantages of traditional weaning practices have not been well researched. It is known that abrupt and sudden termination of breastfeeding, which is an important link between mother and baby, and the methods used for this purpose may cause trauma to both the mother and baby.^{2,14} It may negatively affect the infant's mental–social development as well as the bonding between mother and child; it may also increase the risk of neglect and abuse. Additional risks include the baby's refusal of food, dehydration, and malnutrition.¹⁴

The success of the breastfeeding process depends on whether or not the mothers receive adequate information and support regarding the development of their child. In line with this, there are opportunities for nurses, who work

with mothers and children, to offer counseling and education to nursing mothers in support of this goal. The specific roles of health professionals should be implemented during the initiation phase of breastfeeding, its continuation, and during the weaning phase. Health professionals understand the importance of encouraging mothers, when possible, to breastfeed for two years; they can also provide instruction on the practices that support a healthy mother–infant separation during the weaning process. At this time, mothers would have the opportunity to learn about the benefits and disadvantages of the various practices.

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study was to evaluate the weaning practices of mothers of children aged 2–5 years who terminated breastfeeding at any time.

Methods

Study design

In this study, a qualitative–quantitative method was used. For this purpose, Creswell's concurrent transformative mixed-model research design was adopted.¹⁶ In this design, which helps to better understand the facts and alternative approaches, qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently and analyzed together to provide strong evidence for the results.

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of mothers of children aged 2–5 years admitted to the pediatric clinic of a state hospital. A purposeful sampling method was used to select 232 mothers.¹⁷ Mothers with breastfeeding experience of any duration were included in the study. Sample size was calculated before data collecting process, considering an alpha at 0.05 as significant level, the incidence of population was taken 0.50 and incidence of study group was taken

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