



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Development and validation of a Breastfeeding Knowledge and Skills Questionnaire[☆]



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KEYWORDS

Breastfeeding;
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Abstract

Introduction: Paediatricians play a key role in the start and duration of breastfeeding. Although it is known that they lack formal education on this subject, there are currently no validated tools available to assess paediatrician knowledge regarding breastfeeding.

Objective: To develop and validate a Breastfeeding Knowledge and Skills Questionnaire for Paediatricians.

Material and methods: Once the knowledge areas were defined, a representative sample of them was chosen to carry out the survey. After pilot testing, non-discriminating questions were removed. Content validity was assessed by 14 breastfeeding experts, yielding 22 scorable items (maximum score: 26 points). To estimate criterion validity, it was hypothesised that a group of paediatricians with a special interest in breastfeeding (1) would obtain better results than paediatricians from a hospital without a maternity ward (2), and the latter would obtain a higher score than paediatric residents receiving training in the same hospital (3). The questionnaire was also evaluated before and after a basic course in breastfeeding.

Results: Breastfeeding experts have an index of agreement of >0.90 for each item. The 3 groups ($n=82$) were compared, finding significant differences between group (1) and the rest. Moreover, an improvement was observed in the participants who attended the breastfeeding course ($n=31$), especially among those with less initial knowledge. Reliability, internal consistency (KR-20 = 0.87), interobserver agreement, and temporal stability were examined, with satisfactory results.

Conclusions: A practical and self-administered tool is presented to assess paediatrician knowledge regarding breastfeeding, with a documented validity and reliability.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Lactancia materna;
Cuestionarios;
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validación;
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Validación de un cuestionario sobre conocimientos y habilidades en lactancia materna**Resumen**

Introducción: Los pediatras desempeñan un papel fundamental en el establecimiento y mantenimiento de la lactancia. Aun conociendo su carencia de formación en este campo, no se dispone actualmente de herramientas validadas para documentarla.

Objetivo: Crear y validar un cuestionario sobre conocimientos y habilidades en lactancia para pediatras.

Material y métodos: Se definen las áreas de conocimiento, escogiéndose una muestra representativa de estas. Se realiza una prueba piloto y se eliminan las preguntas no discriminantes. La validez de contenido se establece por 14 expertos en lactancia, obteniéndose 22 ítems puntuables (26 puntos máximos). Para aproximarse a la validez de criterio, se hipotetizó que un grupo de pediatras con especial interés en lactancia (1) obtendría mejores resultados que pediatras (2) de un hospital sin maternidad y estos que los residentes (3) de pediatría del mismo hospital. También se analizaron las notas antes y después de un curso básico en lactancia.

Resultados: Los jueces tienen un índice de acuerdos $>0,90$ para cada ítem. Se comparan los 3 grupos ($n=82$), hallando diferencias entre el grupo con interés en lactancia y el resto; y se observa mejoría de la puntuación en los alumnos del curso ($n=31$), especialmente en aquellos que partían de peores conocimientos. Respecto de la fiabilidad se examinan la consistencia interna (Kuder-Richardson $20=0,87$), concordancia interobservadores y estabilidad temporal, con resultados satisfactorios.

Conclusiones: Se ofrece una herramienta para evaluar el conocimiento de los pediatras en lactancia, de la que se documentan validez y fiabilidad, adaptada a nuestro contexto, breve y autoadministrable en papel u *online*.

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Introduction

The WHO and the Spanish Paediatric Association (Asociación Española de Pediatría, AEP) recommend exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months before introduce complementary foods, continuing breastfeeding for at least 2 years. However, few mothers follow these recommendations.¹ Low breastfeeding rates are a public health issue, with overwhelming evidence in the literature of the risks of artificial feeding,^{2,3} in addition to the economical burden for the community implied by early weaning.^{2,4} Paediatricians play an essential role in the initiation, maintenance and duration rates of breastfeeding.^{5,6} However, it is widely acknowledged that their training is deficient.⁷⁻¹¹ There are various questionnaires on this topic,¹¹⁻¹³ but, as far as we know, there are no validated tools to assess the breastfeeding knowledge of professionals. Our objective is to develop and validate a questionnaire about breastfeeding knowledge and skills for paediatricians. Quantifying knowledge should aid towards planning and justifying steps to improve paediatric training.

Material and methods**Definition of construct and questionnaire development**

Objective: to quantify breastfeeding knowledge and skills.

Target population: paediatricians and resident paediatricians.

Concepts to be measured: basic breastfeeding knowledge, together with skills in daily handling of breastfeeding issues. Some knowledge areas are proposed (Table 1) based on earlier suggestions.^{11,14,15} After defining these, it was decided that not all of them would be represented, since to be applicable the test duration could not exceed 15–20 min.^{7,12,16}

Item selection: a preliminary prototype was designed and tested in 54 questionnaires (before and after a breastfeeding course), after which 3 non-discriminating questions (correct by more than 95% of the sample) were removed. Following this, a second prototype was proposed, tested on 10 paediatric residents, and examined by a panel of judges, after which the definitive questionnaire was generated.

Composition: the questionnaire, entitled "Questionnaire about breastfeeding knowledge" (Encuesta sobre conocimientos en lactancia, ECoLa), comprises 22 questions with a maximum score of 26 points (anexo 1). There are also questions – from 23 onwards – that are not scored, although they reflect variables which may have an influence on the study objective. Items 18 and 21 deserve special mention since they allow free text, limited to very few words:

Item 18 asks for 5 aspects of breastfeeding (one point for every correct answer). Those shown in the WHO breastfeeding observation form were deemed correct.¹⁷ This list was expanded by the judges (Annexe 2). An answer is correct if it is included in the checklist, although at the discretion of the evaluator an answer not included in the list may be deemed correct. This should only occur

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