



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Maternal perception and attitudes regarding healthcare professionals' guidelines on feeding practices in the child's first year of life[☆]

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KEYWORDS

Maternal behavior;
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Abstract

Objective: To evaluate the maternal perceptions and attitudes related to adherence to healthcare professionals' guidelines on breastfeeding and complementary feeding, and associated factors.

Methods: A cross-sectional analysis of data from a randomized field trial was performed, in which 20 health centers (HCs) were selected in the city of Porto Alegre, state of Rio Grande do Sul, from eight Health Management Districts of the city. Pregnant women were selected from these HCs, and when the children were aged between six and nine months, data regarding the maternal perception of adherence to professional advice and consequences of feeding practices on child health were obtained during home visits. Association analyses were performed using Poisson regression.

Results: Data were collected from 631 mother-child binomials. According to the mothers' perception, 47% reported not following instructions received in the HU. Among these, 45.7% did not recognize the importance of eating habits for the child's health. The perception of adherence to professional advice was associated with higher prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding (EBF), introduction of solid food (ISF) after four months, introduction of non-recommended foods after six months, and higher family income. A higher prevalence of EBF and ISF was observed after four months ($p < 0.05$) among mothers who believed in the importance of feeding habits for the child's health.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Comportamento materno;
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Conclusion: There was a high prevalence of mothers who did not follow the advice of health professionals; the perception that food does not affect the child's health can be a barrier to the improvement of eating habits in childhood.

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Percepção e atitudes maternas em relação às orientações de profissionais de saúde referentes a práticas alimentares no primeiro ano de vida

Resumo

Objetivo: Avaliar a percepção e as atitudes maternas relacionadas à adesão às orientações de profissionais de saúde sobre aleitamento materno e alimentação complementar e fatores associados.

Métodos: Análise transversal de dados de ensaio de campo randomizado, em que foram sorteadas 20 Unidades de Saúde (US) de Porto Alegre-RS das oito gerências distritais de saúde do município. Gestantes atendidas nestas US foram selecionadas e, aos 6-9 meses de idade das crianças, foram obtidos, em visitas domiciliares, dados quanto à percepção materna de adesão às orientações dos profissionais e de consequências das práticas alimentares na saúde da criança. Análises de associação foram realizadas por meio de Regressão de Poisson.

Resultados: Foram obtidos dados de 631 binômios mãe-criança. Conforme a percepção das mães, 47% relataram não seguir orientações recebidas nas US. Dentre essas, 45,7% não reconhecem a importância da alimentação para a saúde da criança. A percepção de adesão às orientações dos profissionais foi associada com maiores prevalências de aleitamento materno exclusivo (AME), introdução de alimentos sólidos (IAS) após quatro meses e introdução de alimentos não recomendados após seis meses, além de maior renda familiar. Observaram-se maiores prevalências de AME e IAS após quatro meses ($p < 0,05$) entre as mães que acreditam na importância da alimentação para a saúde da criança.

Conclusão: Houve elevada prevalência de mães que não seguem as orientações dos profissionais de saúde e a percepção de que a alimentação não influencia a saúde da criança pode ser uma barreira para melhorias nas práticas alimentares na infância.

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Introduction

Dietary guidelines for children under two years recommend exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) until the sixth month of life and complementary feeding after this age in order to ensure proper growth and development and to prevent morbidities, especially iron-deficiency anemia.^{1,2} In Brazil, data from the Second Survey on the Prevalence of Breastfeeding in Brazilian Capitals³ demonstrated that half of the children had EBF for 54.1 days or less. Furthermore, the introduction of other foods in the child's diet proved to be inadequate: approximately 18% of children consumed liquids such as teas, juices, and other types of milk in the first month of life; 21% consumed salty foods between three and six months of age; and 8.9% consumed non-recommended foods such as cookies and snacks at ages between three and six months 46.4% between six and nine months, and 71.7% between nine and 12 months.³

The reasons related to weaning and early introduction of foods are many; socioeconomic and demographic factors,⁴⁻⁷ psychological and behavioral characteristics of the mother and the family,^{6,8} and factors related to the health professional⁹⁻¹² should be highlighted. Among the determinants related to the healthcare professionals and their guidelines, the lack of information from professionals,¹³ the difficulties in communication between the professional and

postpartum women,¹⁰ the mother's personal divergences regarding the dietary guidelines received,¹⁴ and the maternal belief that feeding practices have little influence on child development must be emphasized.¹⁵ Intervention studies on breastfeeding (BF) and complementary feeding in different populations concluded that there are barriers in several areas that can influence maternal nonadherence to healthcare professionals' guidelines.¹⁶⁻¹⁸ Considering this evidence, this study aimed to evaluate the maternal perceptions and attitudes regarding adherence to healthcare professionals' guidelines on BF practices and complementary feeding, and associated factors.

Methods

This was a cross-sectional analysis of data collected between April of 2008 and March of 2010, in a cluster-randomized field trial. Participants were women in the third trimester of the pregnancy, treated at 20 health centers (HCs) in the city of Porto Alegre, as well as the infants born to these mothers. The sample size calculation was performed for the primary purpose of the larger study: to assess the impact of healthcare professionals' training on the feeding practices in the first two years of a child's life. Consequently, 720 pregnant women were included in the study, distributed between intervention and control groups.

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