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REVIEW ARTICLE

Factors associated with breastfeeding maintenance for 12 months or more: a systematic review[☆]

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KEYWORDS

Review;
Breast feeding;
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Abstract

Objective: Synthesize the information about the factors associated with maintenance of breastfeeding for 12 months or more.

Data source: A systematic review was conducted in the Pubmed/Medline, Scielo, and Lilacs databases, including articles published in Portuguese or English since 2004 on the factors associated with breastfeeding maintenance for at least 12 months; review articles and those with qualitative design were excluded. The factors were organized into four levels, according to the chronological proximity to the outcome: distal, distal intermediate, proximal intermediate, and proximal; nationality and place/area of residence were considered contextual factors.

Summary of data: 1174 articles were identified, of which 19 were included in this review, comprising seven cohort studies and 12 cross-sectional studies. A total of 39 of the 75 assessed factors were associated with the outcome at least once. The factors with the highest percentages of associations with maintenance of breastfeeding for 12 months or more, considering the number of times they were tested were: children whose parents are the caregivers (100%), some type of maternal exposure to smoke (54%), children and/or parents are immigrants/foreigners (50%), live in urban areas (42.9%), older maternal age (40%), married women (37.5%), higher level of maternal education (31.3%), greater parity (30.8%), and lower income (30%).

Conclusions: The maintenance of breastfeeding for 12 months or more is associated with multiple factors, emphasizing the contextual factors and those related to some maternal sociodemographic characteristics. Associations differ in effect and magnitude between the different populations studied.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Revisão;
Aleitamento
materno;
Fatores
epidemiológicos

Fatores associados à manutenção da amamentação por 12 meses ou mais: revisão sistemática**Resumo**

Objetivo: Sintetizar as informações sobre os fatores associados à manutenção da amamentação por 12 meses ou mais.

Fontes de dados: Foi conduzida revisão sistemática nas bases de dados Pubmed/Medline, Scielo e Lilacs, incluindo artigos publicados em língua portuguesa ou inglesa desde 2004 versando sobre fatores associados à amamentação por, no mínimo, 12 meses. Excluíram-se artigos de revisão e com delineamento qualitativo. Os fatores foram organizados em quatro níveis de acordo com a proximidade cronológica com o desfecho: distal, intermediário distal, intermediário proximal e proximal; nacionalidade e local/área de residência foram considerados fatores contextuais.

Síntese dos dados: Identificou-se 1.174 artigos, dos quais 19 foram selecionados para revisão, sendo sete estudos de coorte e 12 transversais. Dos 75 fatores explorados, 39 mostraram-se associados ao desfecho ao menos uma vez. Os fatores com os maiores percentuais de associações com a manutenção da amamentação por 12 meses ou mais, considerando o número de vezes que foram testados, foram: filhos terem os pais como cuidadores (100%), algum tipo de exposição materna ao fumo (54%), crianças e/ou pais serem imigrantes/estrangeiros (50%), morar em zona urbana (42,9%), maior idade materna (40%), mãe ser casada (37,5%), maior escolaridade materna (31,3%), maior número de filhos (30,8%) e menor renda familiar (30%).

Conclusões: A manutenção da amamentação por 12 meses ou mais está associada a múltiplos fatores, com destaque para os fatores contextuais e os relacionados a algumas características sociodemográficas das mães. As associações diferem em efeito e magnitude entre as diferentes populações estudadas.

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Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the maintenance of breastfeeding (BF) for 2 years or more,¹ based on the positive impact of breastfeeding on the health of the child and the breastfeeding mother, as well as the economic impact.^{2,3} Scientific evidence demonstrates the dose-response effect of breastfeeding, especially against morbidity and mortality due to infectious diseases^{4,5} and overweight/obesity,⁶⁻⁹ favoring orofacial development^{10,11} and the intelligence quotient.^{3,12-14}

Despite the WHO recommendation, the maintenance of breastfeeding after the first year of the child's life is practiced by few women, being more common in low-income countries, where the prevalence of BF at 12 months and 24 months is higher than 90% and 60%, respectively.⁴ In most high-income populations, this prevalence is below 20%, with important differences between countries, such as Norway (38%), the United States (27%), Sweden (16%), and the United Kingdom (1%).⁴ In Brazil, despite the significant advances in BF indicators since the 1980s, less than half of the children aged between 12 and 14 months and approximately one-third of those aged 21-23 months are breastfed.^{15,16}

Early weaning determinants have been widely assessed.¹⁷⁻¹⁹ However, little is known about factors associated with continued breastfeeding after 12 months. A Brazilian study found that, unlike what is reported for early weaning that the presence of the child's father in the home

was a protective factor for BF,^{20,21} the cohabitation with the husband/partner was a risk factor for the maintenance of BF for 2 years or more.²² This discrepancy raises the suspicion that some factors involved in the maintenance of breastfeeding for a longer period differ from those associated with early weaning.

The present review aimed to collect the available evidence to increase the knowledge about factors involved in breastfeeding maintenance for 12 months or more, organizing the factors hierarchically, according to their proximity to the outcome. The results shown here may guide future research on continuous BF, in addition to helping in the establishment of measures that promote longer breastfeeding duration.

Methods

This is a systematic review using a pre-established protocol for searching, selecting, and collecting data, adapted to the recommendations of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systemic Reviews (PRISMA) guidelines for meta-analysis and systematic review studies.²³ As few studies that addressed the maintenance of breastfeeding for 2 years or more were retrieved, the authors chose to study this practice for 12 months or more.

A search was carried out in the Pubmed/Medline, Scielo and Lilacs databases, using the following search terms, based on the Descriptors in Science and Health and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH): aleitamento materno,

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