

ABSTRACT

Prevalence and determinants of breast-feeding among mothers of infants two-three months old attending child health clinics at two health centres in Kingston and St. Andrew and two in St. Ann Jamaica

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The prevalence of exclusive breast-feeding has remained below targets established by the Ministry of Health of Jamaica.

This cross-sectional study examined the prevalence and determinants of breast-feeding among mothers of infants two to three months of age attending child health clinics at two health centres in Kingston and St. Andrew and two in St. Ann.

A total of 95 mothers were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. Two focus group discussions were also conducted. Data from the questionnaire were analyzed in Epi-info version 6.03.

The prevalence of breast-feeding was found to be high (90.5%) while that of exclusive breast-feeding was low (8.4%). Younger women were less likely to breast-feed exclusively. There was no significant association between parity, employment or marital status and exclusive breast-feeding .

Among the other factors examined, failure to get help to solve breast-feeding problems was the only one found to be significantly associated with cessation of breast-feeding (Fisher's exact test, two tailed $p = 0.0095$).

The role of education, and various types of support for mothers, were identified among factors which would facilitate exclusive breast-feeding for at least four months. Further studies are required to determine the relationship between employment status of mothers and exclusive breast-feeding. Education programmes should aim to improve attitudes of mothers, should target young mothers and pay keen attention to changes in the socio-economic environment.