

## Factors related to any-breastfeeding duration in a sample of Malay mothers

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** While the benefits of breastfeeding have been established, sustaining breastfeeding for a longer duration is a challenge. This cross-sectional study aimed to determine factors related to any breastfeeding duration in a sample of the ever-breastfed Malay mothers.

**Materials and Methods:** Mothers regardless of their current breastfeeding status and having a child between 12 and 36 months participated in this study. We assessed breastfeeding practices, obstetric history, nutritional status and information about their breastfed child.

**Results:** A total of 60 ever-breastfed mothers aged  $30.9 \pm 3.4$  years participated in the study. The duration of any breastfeeding was  $15.0 \pm 7.6$  months with 31.7% were still breastfed up to 24 months. The BMI of the participants was in the normal range but increased by  $1.8 \text{ kgm}^{-2}$  as compared to the pre-pregnancy BMI. Intake of macronutrients distributed evenly but a substantial proportion of the participants did not achieve the recommendations for energy, calcium and iron intake. Mother's age ( $r = 0.288$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), duration of exclusive breastfeeding ( $r = 0.408$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and later introduction to formula milk ( $r = 0.550$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) were positively related with duration of any breastfeeding.

**Conclusion:** In this sample of ever breastfed Malay women, only 31.7% were still breastfeeding. The increase in BMI at a postpartum and possible micronutrients inadequacy are of a particular concern. A longer duration of any breastfeeding was related to a longer duration of exclusive breastfeeding, the mother's age and later introduction to formula-feeding. Understanding issues of breastfeeding mothers help to sustain a longer duration of breastfeeding.

**Keyword:** Breastfeeding; Breastfeeding duration; Continuation of breastfeeding