

Education status as a predictor of the duration of breastfeeding in a representative sample of Greek women

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Introduction: The purpose of the current study was to identify factors that affect and predict the duration of breastfeeding.

Methods: From October to June 2009, a nationwide survey was performed to students aged 10-12 years old. A stratified sampling by regions of the country was used to obtain a representative sample. A questionnaire assessing dietary, lifestyle and socioeconomic factors; maternal education, family income and type of occupation, was administered to the family of the children that were assessed. A total of 1962 mothers, aged 26 to 55 years were enrolled. Women were characterized as long-term breast feeders if the total reported months of breastfeeding were greater than the median of the sample (3 months) and if months of exclusive breastfeeding were greater than the median of the sample (2 months).

Results: Mean education status of long-term breast feeders was significantly higher than the rest of the group (14±3 years of education vs. 13±4, respectively) ($p<0.01$). Multiple logistic regression analyses adjusted for age and body mass index revealed that a 5 year increase in education is associated with 27.6% increase in the likelihood of high duration of breastfeeding (for 1 year increase OR=1.05 95%CI 1.02-1.08) and with 24.6% higher duration of exclusive breastfeeding (for 1 year increase OR=1.045 95%CI 1.013-1.077).

Conclusion: Education status clearly has an impact on the breastfeeding duration. The propensity to breastfeed is not only of importance for the infant, but is also of concern as an indicator of health behaviour related to social factors.

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None Disclosed

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