

## 15. NURSING ADVICE IN THE PROCESS OF NATURAL FEEDING IN THE FIRST YEAR OF LIFE OF CHILDREN

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**Introduction.** Nurses are the heart of every health center, they provide comfort, compassion and care without a prescription. Nursing is an integral part of the healthcare system. All nurses play a valuable role in facilitating the health of mothers, infants and children by protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding.

**Aim of study.** Determining the role of nursing interventions in the natural feeding process by analysing breastfeeding mothers' knowledge and identifying difficulties in the breastfeeding process.

**Methods and materials.** The study comprised 2 stages, literature review and a prospective observational study. The research questionnaire consisted of 6 sections, 50 questions in total, 45 closed questions and 5 open questions. The research examined mothers' knowledge of natural feeding and the nurse's ability to intervene when women encounter difficulties.

**Results.** The questionnaire was completed by 719 respondents aged over 16. The highest proportion of respondents' age is 31-35 years, with 39.1%. The majority of women have completed higher education 85.3%, have given birth naturally 75.2% and exclusively breastfed 74.1%. In 61.80% cases, the medical staff encouraged exclusive feeding and explained how to do it correctly, and in 38.20% it was not. Of the total women (719), the majority were supervised and guided by the nurse - 55%; 13.50% by the doctor; 11.70% by the lactation consultant; 5.50% by the mothers and 14.30% by no one. The process of informing medical staff about correct breastfeeding was useful in 50.9% of cases, very useful in 25.7% and unnecessary in 23.4%. It is appreciable that 81.4% of all women breastfeed their babies for 12 months and more. Also, 86% of all mothers breastfeed their babies on demand. On the other hand, when they faced difficulties in the breastfeeding process out of the total women only 19% turned to the family doctor, 19% to the nurse, 7% to any health centre and 55% did not turn to anyone.

**Conclusion.** It is the highly educated general nurses who should be with every woman from conception, through pregnancy and after birth. For both mother and child to be well both physically and psychologically, a competent and open person is needed to provide knowledge and be there for them in any situation. The presence of the nurse in a mother's life inspires great confidence in the mother's every action towards the child.