

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis deals with the issue of exclusive breastfeeding - especially with the impact of awareness and professional help on the length of exclusive breastfeeding. The work is divided into two parts, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part briefly describes the physiology of lactation, the composition of breast milk, its comparison with infant formula and benefits of breastfeeding for mother and child. It also discusses the principles of successful breastfeeding, breastfeeding techniques, breastfeeding support, the most common problems that can occur during breastfeeding, and best practices to manage them. The practical part was made on the basis of an anonymous questionnaire survey, which took place from December 2021 to March 2022 in 4 pediatric offices in the capital city of Prague and the district of Prague-East. The questionnaire was designed for mothers of their first-born infants between 6 and 12 months of age. A total of 32 respondents took part in the survey.

The main aim of the work was to find out whether the professional help provided during difficulties during exclusive breastfeeding helps to significantly prolong the duration of exclusive breastfeeding (with a comparison of individual professions). The secondary aims were to find out the proportion of mothers who need professional help during exclusive breastfeeding, to find out the most common difficulties that occur during exclusive breastfeeding and to find out about awareness of breastfeeding women about recommended length of exclusive breastfeeding (as recommended by ESPGHAN) and its benefits.

The results show that a significant proportion of breastfeeding women (87 %) need professional help during exclusive breastfeeding due to breastfeeding difficulties. 94 % of women decide to breastfeed before delivery, 65 % of respondents stated the correct recommended length of exclusive breastfeeding, 59 % of women managed to adhere to the recommended length of exclusive breastfeeding. In case of difficulties, breastfeeding mothers most often turn to a lactation consultant (50 %), 92.9 % of women stated the subjective success of help from a lactation consultant. A positive correlation was found between seeking professional help from a lactation consultant and subsequent adherence to the recommended length of breastfeeding, but without statistically proven significance due to a small sample size. The influence of the lactation consultant on the mother's subjective feeling about overcoming the difficulties was statistically significant, and the visit of the lactation consultant during the stay in the maternity hospital was statistically significantly correlated with the observance of the recommended length of exclusive breastfeeding. In other professions, it was not possible to prove a significant effect on the length of exclusive breastfeeding or the subjective feeling of the mother. The most common problems of breastfeeding women were difficulties with latching on (46 %) and insufficient milk production (39 %). Awareness of mothers about the recommended length of exclusive breastfeeding has a positive and statistically significant effect on maintaining the recommended length of breastfeeding.

Keywords: exclusive breastfeeding, breast milk, infant, lactation consultant, health education