

Early desmame among children under six months in primary health care

Desmame precoce entre crianças menores de seis meses na atenção primária à saúde

Desmame precoz entre niños menores de seis meses en atención primaria de salud

RESUMO

Objetivo: identificar as evidências científicas relacionadas à interrupção do aleitamento materno exclusivo entre crianças menores de seis meses na Atenção Primária à Saúde. Métodos: Revisão Integrativa da Literatura realizada nas bases LILACS, Scopus e PubMed®, com utilização dos Descritores em Ciências da Saúde em português: "Aleitamento Materno", "Desmame Precoce", "Atenção Primária à Saúde", no período de 2014 a 2021. Resultados: foram selecionados 11 estudos para análise interpretativa que permitiu a identificação dos principais fatores que levaram ao desmame precoce: desconhecimento da mulher, percepção da mulher de que tem leite fraco/insuficiente e o trabalho materno fora do lar. O apoio e promoção da amamentação foi um fator que contribuiu para a manutenção do aleitamento materno exclusivo até o sexto mês. Conclusão: é primordial que a equipe de saúde identifique os fatores que prejudicam o aleitamento materno exclusivo para promover, apoiar e incentivar esta prática diminuindo os índices de desmame precoce.

DESCRIPTORIOS: Aleitamento materno; Desmame precoce; Atenção Primária à Saúde.

ABSTRACT

Objective: to identify scientific evidence related to the interruption of exclusive breastfeeding among children younger than six months in Primary Health Care. Method: Integrative review of the literature conducted in lilacs, scopus and pubmed®, using the descriptors controlled in Portuguese: "Breastfeeding", "Early Weaning", "Primary Health Care", in the time frame from 2014 to 2021 using the Boolean operator "AND". Results: 11 complete studies were selected for interpretative analysis that allowed the identification of the main factors that led to early weaning: unknown of women, perception of women that they have weak/insufficient milk and maternal work outside the home. Breastfeeding support and promotion was a factor that contributed to the maintenance of exclusive breastfeeding until the sixth month. Conclusion: it is essential that the health team remains up-to-date and able to promote, support and encourage exclusive breastfeeding by reducing early weaning rates.

DESCRIPTORS: Breastfeeding; Early weaning; Primary Health Care.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: identificar evidencia científica relacionada con la interrupción de la lactancia materna exclusiva entre niños menores de seis meses en Atención Primaria de Salud. Métodos: Revisión integradora de la literatura realizada en lilacs, scopus y pubmed®, utilizando los descriptores controlados en portugués: "Lactancia materna", "Destete temprano", "Atención primaria de salud", en el marco de tiempo de 2014 a 2021 utilizando el operador booleano "AND". Resultados: Se seleccionaron 11 estudios completos para el análisis interpretativo que permitieron identificar los principales factores que llevaron al destete temprano: desconocimiento de las mujeres, percepción de las mujeres de que tienen leche débil/insuficiente y trabajo materno fuera del hogar. El apoyo y la promoción de la lactancia materna fue un factor que contribuyó al mantenimiento de la lactancia materna exclusiva hasta el sexto mes. Conclusión: es fundamental que el equipo de salud se mantenga actualizado y sea capaz de promover, apoyar y fomentar la lactancia materna exclusiva mediante la reducción de las tasas de destete precoz.

DESCRIPTORIOS: Lactancia materna; Destete temprano; Atención Primaria de Salud.

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INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of life, breastfeeding is considered necessary for the maintenance of the baby's health, being complete in nutrients, in addition to containing immunomodulatory compounds that allow it to be designated as the first vaccine that protects the baby's health.¹ Breastfeeding is a physiological process that ensures nutrition and survival and is activated shortly after the baby is born, bringing benefits to both mother and child.²

When breastfeeding is practiced exclusively until the baby's sixth month of life, it has several health benefits for both mother and child.³ Breastfeeding promotes for the mother, protection against breast and ovarian cancer, important uterine contraction in postpartum, reduces the risk of osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis and helps to control stress.⁴ For the child, the act of breastfeeding protects the respiratory tract and gastrointestinal tract from possible infections, in addition, no other food is as complete as breast milk.³

Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) is when the child receives only breast milk through the breast or expressed. Breast milk is the nutritional gold standard for the healthy growth of the child, and the WHO recom-

mends EBF until the sixth month of life and as a food supplement until the child is two years old or more.² EBF can prevent up to 13% of infant deaths from preventable respiratory tract disorders, in addition, it can prevent about 53% of deaths caused by diarrheal diseases and 20% of all causes of death by the second year of life.⁴

In several countries there are programs that encourage the practice of BF.⁵ In China, India, Nigeria, Mexico and Indonesia, 236,000 children die annually due to early weaning.⁶ In low- and middle-income countries, only 37% of children under six months of age are exclusively breastfed.⁷

There are factors that reduce the duration of breastfeeding leading to early weaning, such as fissures, pain when breastfeeding, mastitis, use of pacifiers and bottles, in addition to the lack of encouragement and instruction and the return to work before the baby is six months old.⁸ The importance of a qualified team in encouraging the practice of AM is highlighted. Since primary care is the gateway to the health system, it is essential that these health professionals are trained to encourage the practice of EBF.⁸

Despite the numerous benefits, the practice of exclusive breastfeeding remains a challenge, thus, the objective of this study is to identify scientific evidence related to

early weaning among children assisted in primary health care.

METHOD

An integrative literature review study, which followed the following steps: elaboration of the guiding question; definition of inclusion and exclusion criteria, terms used for search and database; data collection, extraction, presentation and analysis.⁹

The research question was elaborated from the PICO strategy¹⁰ (Population: children under six months of age; Interest: early weaning; Context: primary health care): What is the scientific evidence related to early weaning among children under six months of age in Primary Health Care?

The search was carried out in July 2021, in the following databases: Latin American and Caribbean Literature on Health Sciences (LILACS), Pubmed and SCOPUS. Terms indexed in the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) were used, combined with the Boolean operator "AND" (Table 1).

Table 2 presents the data of the articles according to authors, title, study objective, methodology and main results. According to the year, one article from 2014, three from 2016, one from 2017, two from 2019, one from 2020 and three from 2021 were

found. As for the language, three were in Portuguese and eight in English.

DISCUSSION

In the analyzed studies, the main factors that led to early weaning were the woman's lack of knowledge about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding^{12,13}, the woman's perception that she has weak/insufficient milk^{14,15} and maternal work outside the home.¹³ The support of the health team in PHC was a factor that contributed to support breastfeeding.¹⁶

Maternal knowledge about the importance of EBF is a determining factor for the maintenance of this practice, and considering the influence that the social environment has on EBF, cultural concepts or myths follow a socially reproductive tendency, influencing the mother to adopt other forms of feeding, and health professionals are largely responsible for building knowledge about the importance of breastfeeding.¹²

Another factor that contributes to early weaning is the perception of women that they have weak/insufficient milk. A study carried out in the capital of Pernambuco showed that EB was practiced by 82.5% of children at discharge after birth, by 75% at 15 days and 46.3% at 30 days. The main allegation for the introduction of other foods and/or liquids was insufficient milk.¹⁵

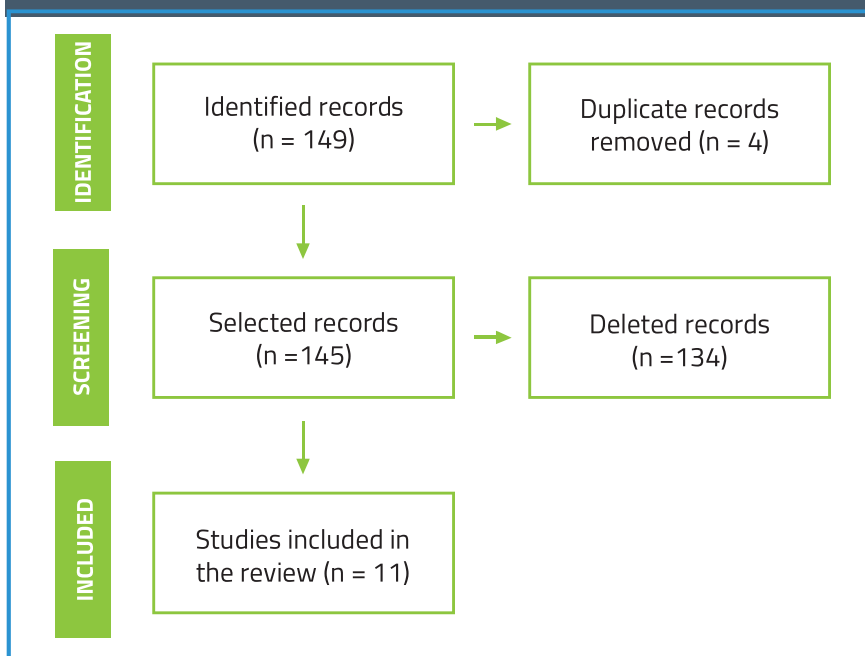
The hospitalization of the child can also

Table 1 – Search in the databases used in this study. Imperatriz, MA, Brazil, 2021

Databases	Search Strategy	No.
Lilacs	Breast feeding [Palavras] and Weaning [Palavras] and Primary Health Care [Palavras]	10
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY (breast AND feeding) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (weaning) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (primary AND health AND care)	111
PubMed	(Breast feeding) AND (Weaning) AND (Primary Health Care)	24

Source: survey data, 2021

Figure 1: Flowchart of information from the search carried out adapted from PRISMA.¹¹



Source: survey data, 2021

Table 2 - Characterization of studies included in the integrative review according to Authors/year, title, object of study, methodology and main results. Imperatriz-MA, Brazil, 2021.

Title	Study objective	Method	Main results
Interfaces of the discontinuation of breastfeeding ¹²	Identify the determinants for the discontinuation of exclusive breastfeeding.	Study with a qualitative approach, developed in a Primary Health Care Unit in Fortaleza-CE, Brazil.	Mother's lack of knowledge about the importance of breastfeeding. Cultural concepts or myths such as weak milk and little milk follow a socially reproductive tendency, on the part of health professionals or those who assist postpartum women, to their constructions.
The infant feeding practices of Chinese immigrant mothers in Australia: A qualitative exploration ¹³	Explore experiences of Chinese immigrant mothers feeding their babies to gain insight into the factors and shape their feeding decisions and perceptions of infant growth.	Study carried out with 36 Chinese immigrant mothers with children aged 0 to 12 months, living in Melbourne, Australia. The interviews were conducted in Chinese, using an interpreter, or in English.	Conflicting opinions about infant feeding and infant growth from grandparents have reduced many mothers' trust in BSE. Doubts about the effectiveness of breastfeeding led to the introduction of supplements. Chinese immigrant mothers in Australia need support to exclusively breastfeed.

<p>Breastfeeding frequency of primary health care professionals and effective factors¹⁴</p>	<p>To determine the frequency of breastfeeding of mothers working in primary care, the differences between the different work groups and the effective factors.</p>	<p>A descriptive study was conducted with an online self-report questionnaire. The snowball sampling method was used for sample selection.</p>	<p>The mean duration of exclusive breastfeeding was 3.9 ± 2.0 months, and the mean duration of total breastfeeding was 16.7 ± 8.5 months. The most common reasons for weaning were reduced milk production, reduced maternity leave.</p>
<p>Exclusive breastfeeding of preterm infants and reasons for its interruption in the first month after hospital discharge <small>(Aleitamento materno exclusivo de prematuros e motivos para sua interrupção no primeiro mês pós-alta hospitalar)¹⁵</small></p>	<p>To estimate the prevalence of EBF of preterm infants at hospital discharge, at 15 and 30 days post-discharge, and to identify maternal allegations for its interruption.</p>	<p>Cross-sectional study with 108 preterm infants born in two Baby-Friendly Hospitals, between April-July 2014.</p>	<p>The main allegation for the introduction of other foods and/or liquids was insufficient milk.</p>
<p>Pattern of infants' feeding and weaning in Suez Governorate, Egypt: an exploratory study¹⁶</p>	<p>Explore feeding and weaning patterns among infants in Egypt and identify their determinants to improve practice and promote children's nutritional status.</p>	<p>Analytical cross-sectional study of 333 mother-infant pairs attended at two primary care centers (PHC) for vaccination sessions between April 2017 and June 2018. Mothers were interviewed using a structured questionnaire.</p>	<p>There is a deficiency in maternal practice in relation to breastfeeding and weaning, despite regularly attending the PHC center. Most mothers started artificial feeding during the first month of life. More than 85% of mothers expressed a need for additional knowledge, and more than half identified the PHC center as the appropriate source for the information.</p>
<p>Simple actions to support breastfeeding can avoid unwanted weaning in infants younger than 6 months hospitalized for bronchiolitis: A before/after study (Bronchilact II)¹⁷</p>	<p>To evaluate a set of actions to promote breastfeeding during hospitalization for acute bronchiolitis.</p>	<p>Cross-sectional study carried out in a tertiary hospital. Continuous breastfeeding data for two bronchiolitis epidemic seasons at 3 months (0.5-6; median, range) post-discharge data were collected by telephone and compared with the same set of data collected from patients with bronchiolitis in the same setting in the year prior to the intervention.</p>	<p>43 mothers (51%) reported that breastfeeding was modified by their child's hospitalization: 20.4% stopped breastfeeding; Bronchiolitis is a high-risk event for discontinuing breastfeeding, but interventions to promote breastfeeding can help prevent the risk of unwanted weaning.</p>
<p>Breast feeding among Brazilian adolescents: Practice and needs¹⁸</p>	<p>To characterize breastfeeding practices among Brazilian adolescents and identify their breastfeeding needs.</p>	<p>Cross-sectional study with a mixed, qualitative and quantitative approach carried out in two stages.</p>	<p>Most teenage mothers had favorable conditions for breastfeeding, such as not working outside the home and having breastfed within the first hour after delivery.</p>
<p>Knowledge, attitude, and practice of breastfeeding among working mothers in South Jordan¹⁹</p>	<p>To assess knowledge and attitudes about breastfeeding among working mothers in southern Jordan.</p>	<p>The investigators randomly selected private and government organizations from all business sectors across Al-Karak Governorate.</p>	<p>Knowledge about breastfeeding among the participants was adequate and their attitudes towards breastfeeding were generally positive. Work-related causes were responsible for premature interruption of breastfeeding in 30% of participants..</p>
<p>Professional guidance and exclusive breastfeeding: a cohort study. <small>(Orientação profissional e aleitamento materno exclusivo: um estudo de coorte)²⁰</small></p>	<p>To analyze the guidance on breastfeeding during pregnancy-puerperal care and the outcome in exclusive breastfeeding.</p>	<p>Prospective cohort study, from July 2013 to February 2015, in a municipality in the northern region of Paraná with 300 postpartum women and their children.</p>	<p>The study helped to identify that professional guidance to promote exclusive breastfeeding up to the sixth month of life does not meet ministerial recommendations to reduce early weaning.</p>
<p>Sociodemographic characteristics related to knowledge of the benefits of breastfeeding (Características sociodemográficas relacionadas ao conhecimento dos benefícios do aleitamento materno)²¹</p>	<p>To describe the profile of women according to the reported number of benefits of breastfeeding and to verify its association with the duration of this practice until the child's 6th month.</p>	<p>A qualitative and prospective observational study carried out with postpartum women in two stages. Generalized linear models were used to identify the profile of postpartum women, as well as to determine the factors associated with the duration of breastfeeding.</p>	<p>The fewest benefits of breastfeeding were reported by women with elementary education and who had prenatal care in the public health system or privately. The number of reported benefits was not associated with the duration of this practice until the 6th month of life;</p>

Knowledge of man about breastfeeding²²

Identify parents' knowledge about breastfeeding.

Exploratory and descriptive study with a qualitative approach, carried out at the Family Health Strategy in Bom Jesus, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil.

Parents who accompanied their wives and children to childcare consultations had more knowledge about breastfeeding, recognized the benefits of it, in this way they could encourage their wives not to practice EB.

Source: research data, 2021

contribute to interrupting breastfeeding, inducing early weaning, so that interventions carried out by the health team during the hospitalization process of children with some type of disease can prevent the risk of unwanted weaning.¹⁷

The early introduction of other foods or liquids besides breast milk contributes to early weaning. Many mothers do not have enough knowledge about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding and end up introducing artificial feeding before the child is six months old.¹⁶ A study showed that most teenage mothers had favorable conditions for breastfeeding, but the practice failed in some recommendations. It is important to know what teenage mothers think about breastfeeding in order to encourage the establishment of practices to maintain breastfeeding for as long as possible and in a way that is satisfactory for both mothers and babies.¹⁸

Family influence can be a factor that contributes to breastfeeding in a negative or positive way, since many times the mother's confidence in breastfeeding exclusively can be harmed when she is influenced by grandparents and other people in the family nucleus. For many new mothers, the anxiety that EB provides insufficient nutrition has led to the introduction of formula before six months of age.¹³

Maternal work outside the home can be a negative influence leading to early weaning, as shown in a study carried out with women in southern Jordan, where 30% of these women ended up prematurely interrupting breastfeeding. Policies to promote breastfeeding would be effective among working women, as would the creation of breastfeeding-friendly work environments.¹⁹ Even among health professionals, working outside the home can influence a lower supply of breast milk, reducing EBF, leading to early weaning.¹⁴

A study carried out in the north of Paraná showed that childcare consultations were a protective factor for EBF until the child's sixth month of life, suggesting that the health team's performance is essential for maintaining this practice²⁰, however, the receipt of previous guidance on breastfeeding is not always associated with the duration of EBF until the child's 6th month, as well as the location of prenatal care, the level of education and the marital status of the woman.²¹

It was also observed that parents who accompanied their wives and children in childcare consultations had more knowledge about breastfeeding, recognized the benefits of it, in this way they could encourage their wives to practice EB.²²

Therefore, it is observed that the practice of breastfeeding can be impaired if the child is hospitalized¹⁷, due to culture and myths¹⁸ that permeate the mother and her family members²⁰, as well as the mother's perception that her milk is weak or insufficient.^{14,15} On the other hand, some factors contribute to breastfeeding, such as the support of health professionals²⁰ that starts from prenatal care and goes to postpartum²¹ when the mother is accompanied in PHC and the support of family members and especially the support of the father.²²

It is essential that breastfeeding promotion and support activities are developed in PHC in order to minimize the factors that lead to early weaning, it is essential to integrate health professionals and managers in the search for strategies that favor adherence to EBF, planning and executing these actions together, strengthening teamwork.²³

CONCLUSION

It was possible to identify in the studies that knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding for mothers is important, so

the main factors that led to early weaning were: women's lack of knowledge about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding, hospitalization of the child, woman's perception that she has weak/insufficient milk and maternal work outside the home. The support and promotion of breastfeeding by the health team in the PHC was a factor that contributed to the maintenance of exclusive breastfeeding until the child's sixth month of life.

Thus, it is essential that the health team remains updated and qualified to promote, support and develop strategies to encourage exclusive breastfeeding, reducing early weaning rates.

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