

## Difficulties encountered around breastfeeding of firstborn children: an integrative review

Dificuldades encontradas em torno do aleitamento materno de primogênitos: uma revisão integrativa

Dificultades encontradas em torno a la lactancia materna de los primogénitos: una revisión integradora

### RESUMO

Objetivo: disseminar a importância da amamentação no desenvolvimento do bebê e da relação afetiva entre mãe e filho. Método: trata-se de uma revisão integrativa, realizada por meio de buscas efetuadas na internet utilizando-se do portal da Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde (BVS) através das bases de dados, LILACS, BDNF e MEDLINE. Foram procurados artigos cadastrados com a utilização dos descritores em saúde: "aleitamento materno", "puérpera", "dificuldade na amamentação" e "primogênitos", sendo selecionados para a amostra todos os artigos disponíveis na íntegra, publicados em português no período de 2018 a 2023. Resultados e discussões: foram evidenciadas, as principais dificuldades da amamentação de primíparas, tanto físicas, como psicológicas e socioculturais. Conclusão: as experiências, dúvidas e expectativas apresentadas pelas mulheres, mostram as falhas, que se iniciam no pré-natal, e se estendem até o período que a puérpera se encontra em casa com a presença de toda a família.

**DESCRITORES:** Aleitamento materno. Assistência de enfermagem. Dificuldades na amamentação.

### ABSTRACT

Objective: to disseminate the importance of breastfeeding in the development of the baby and the emotional relationship between mother and child. Method: this is an integrative review, carried out through searches carried out on the internet using the Virtual Health Library (VHL) portal through the databases LILACS, BDNF and MEDLINE. We searched for articles registered using the health descriptors: "breastfeeding", "puerperal woman", "difficulty in breastfeeding" and "firstborn", with all articles available in full, published in Portuguese in the period being selected for the sample. 2018 to 2023. Results and discussions: the main difficulties of breastfeeding primiparous women were highlighted, both physical, psychological and sociocultural. Conclusion: the experiences, doubts and expectations presented by women show the flaws, which begin during prenatal care and continue until the period in which the postpartum woman is at home with the entire family present.

**DESCRIPTORS:** "Breastfeeding". "Nursing assistance. "Breastfeeding difficulties".

### RESUMEN

Objetivo: Divulgar la importancia de la lactancia materna en el desarrollo del bebé y en la relación afectiva entre madre e hijo. Método: Se trata de una revisión integradora, realizada a través de búsquedas en Internet utilizando el portal de la Biblioteca Virtual en Salud (BVS) a través de las bases de datos LILACS, BDNF y MEDLINE. Se buscaron artículos registrados utilizando los descriptores de salud "lactancia materna", "mujeres puérperas", "dificultades en la lactancia materna" y "niños primogénitos", y se seleccionaron para la muestra todos los artículos disponibles en su totalidad y publicados en portugués entre 2018 y 2023. Resultados y discusiones: se destacaron las principales dificultades en la lactancia de las mujeres primíparas, tanto físicas como psicológicas y socioculturales. Conclusión: las experiencias, dudas y expectativas presentadas por las mujeres muestran las fallas que comienzan en la atención prenatal y se extienden hasta el período en que la puérpera está en casa con toda la familia.

**DESCRIPTORES:** Lactancia materna. Cuidados de enfermería. Dificultades de la lactancia materna.

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## INTRODUCTION

**M**aternal care is an act that represents a set of diverse biopsychosocial-environmental actions that will allow the newborn to develop appropriately. The child needs to feel surrounded by affection, in addition to a series of precautions that must be taken to ensure, among others, adequate nutrition (FERREIRA et al, 2015).

The birth of a child is an event that awakens many feelings in parents, and when carrying out motherhood for the first time it is normal for a woman to experience a whirlwind of feelings, such as joy, satisfaction, fear, fulfillment and insecurity; which tend to be intense and related to sociocultural, financial reality or family and interpersonal

relationships. The mother ends up demonstrating ignorance and incapacity, in addition to neglecting some tasks necessary for the well-being of the newborn (ANDRADE et al, 2015), which can interfere with the bond between the mother and her baby, in many cases affecting the breastfeeding process.

According to the Ministry of Health (2018), breastfeeding is the best food for a newborn, as it promotes the physical and mental health of the child and mother, developing an emotional bond between them. Breastfeeding has the benefit of reducing the mother's risk of contracting breast and cervical cancer, helping to reduce diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and obesity. (CUNHA et al, 2016) It is the healthiest way to feed and protect your child, as hu-

man milk is the most complete food in the first months of life, being a rich and balanced compound, with all the essential nutrients for its survival. Breastfeeding prevents infant mortality, combats diarrhea, malnutrition, respiratory infections and reduces the risk of allergies (COSTA et al, 2017).

By definition, exclusive breastfeeding is the use of breast milk until 6 months of age, as the only food, with early weaning being the process that begins with the introduction of any food into the child's diet other than breast milk, even teas and water, which leads to the complete suspension of breastfeeding. (Brazil, 1999)

One of the factors that are related to problems with breastfeeding is the difficulty inherent in the technique. It is believed

that a wrong technique makes it difficult to suck and empty the breast, which can affect the dynamics of milk production. Other circumstances that interfere with the breastfeeding process are difficulty in latching and sucking, the baby's agitation and the mother's perception of insufficient milk supply (MOURA et al, 2017).

Although the importance of breastfeeding is recognized and proven, sometimes the demands and expectations placed on and by the postpartum woman also end up making this period even more difficult, in addition to the fact that attention is exclusively focused on the baby, often relegating physical and emotional problems that may be presented by the mother (GIORDANI et al, 2018).

Added to this are beliefs passed down through generations that interfere with the development of this process, leading many women to wean early. Highlights include the myth that milk is weak, that breast size is related to the capacity for milk production, and that the use of teas improves colic in the first days of life (SIMÕES et al, 2015).

Therefore, the work of the nursing team within the scope of the National Breastfeeding Policy must: prevent, identify and resolve difficulties in the interaction between mother and child, such as the anatomy of the nipples, inadequate attachment, fissures, letdown of milk and sensation of pain. More precise attention is needed to the mother's needs during breastfeeding while she is hospitalized, with these problems being identified early and resolved so that breastfeeding is successful (LEAL et al, 2014).

Some factors that are relevant during breast sucking that should be analyzed by health professionals in educational activities and promoting the practice of breastfeeding. These aspects, such as the presence of nipple lesions or pain, breast engorgement and feeling of tiredness, should be observed when breastfeeding during hospitalization, as they are conditions indicative of difficulties with the breastfeeding technique, frequently mentioned in the first hours postpartum (OLIVEIRA et al., 2020).

Reasons why it is increasingly important for health professionals to provide guidance

and explanations that help demystify concepts and help women during pregnancy and the postpartum period. Noting that health education actions are strongly influenced by popular and empirical knowledge and cultural and religious traditions about gestational aspects (SIMÕES et al, 2015), it is therefore necessary to understand the difficulties encountered by primiparous women and the important responsibility of health professionals regarding guidance during this period.

Therefore, since prenatal care, women must receive information regarding pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period, guidance that will be important to go through this phase with greater safety and pleasure, considering that misinformation causes excessive concern in addition to frustrating the expectations generated. In this context, the following guiding question arises: What are the difficulties encountered by primiparous women in breastfeeding and the factors that affect the maintenance of their physical and mental health? The objective is to: Assess the difficulties encountered by primiparous women in breastfeeding and the factors that affect the maintenance of their physical and mental health.

This article is justified by the fact that the author in question had breastfed two children and although during the prenatal care of her first-born child she carried out all the monitoring and examinations scheduled for the period, she never received guidance regarding the act of breastfeeding, such as: positioning, correct baby latch, anatomy of the nipples and discomfort generated during the lactation phase. Although 14 years have passed, with the advent of technology, reports of problems faced during this period have become more evident due to the exposure that primiparous women have given to the problem.

Therefore, thinking about those women who are affected by frustration when breastfeeding, and who do not have the correct knowledge, nor the appropriate guidance and training from health teams, in addition to the lack of family knowledge and pressures imposed by society, this work aims to offer a more humanized perspective focused

on the postpartum woman as a fundamental link in the success of breastfeeding.

## METHOD

### TYPE OF RESEARCH

This article is an integrative literature review, aiming to gather and condense the results of empirical research on a theme or research question. Integrative review is a method that includes checking relevant studies, which can demonstrate gaps in knowledge on a given topic, in addition to explaining areas that require further research. This study system includes the review of relevant research that supports decision-making to improve clinical practice (ERCOLE et al, 2014).

### RESEARCH STEPS AND LOCATIONS

The integrative review is important in the area of nursing as it allows the synthesis of several studies and research already published, a fact that makes it possible to obtain general conclusions regarding a specific area of study. This study is carried out according to some steps; the first is the identification of the theme and selection of the hypothesis or research question for preparing the review; the second is the establishment of criteria for inclusion and exclusion of studies/sampling or literature; the third step talks about defining the information to be extracted from the selected studies; the fourth deals with the evaluation of the studies included in the integrative review; the fifth, the interpretation of the results and the last corresponds to the presentation of the review. (MENDES et al, 2008)

The bibliographic search took place between the months of February and May of 2023, using the Virtual Health Library (VHL) and developed together with the Medical Literature Analysis databases and Retrieval System Online (MEDLINE), Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences (LILACS) and Specialized Bibliographic Database in the Area of Nursing (BDENF).

### SAMPLE SELECTION

When searching for articles, we used

descriptors selected according to the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) and with the combination of Boolean operators “breastfeeding” OR “postpartum woman” OR “difficulty breastfeeding” OR “firstborn”. Based on the combination of these descriptors, 2,829 publications were located, 1,873 of which were available in full. The articles published in the selected databases totaled 1,424. For the screening of studies, the period considered was a total of five years, from 2018 to 2023, which resulted in 505 articles, with a total of 328 articles published in Portuguese.

After reading the titles of all these publications, in addition to the summary of all those that potentially met the purpose of this article, and aiming to refine the sample using inclusion and exclusion criteria, 291 articles were excluded because they did not answer the research question or because they were indexed repeatedly.

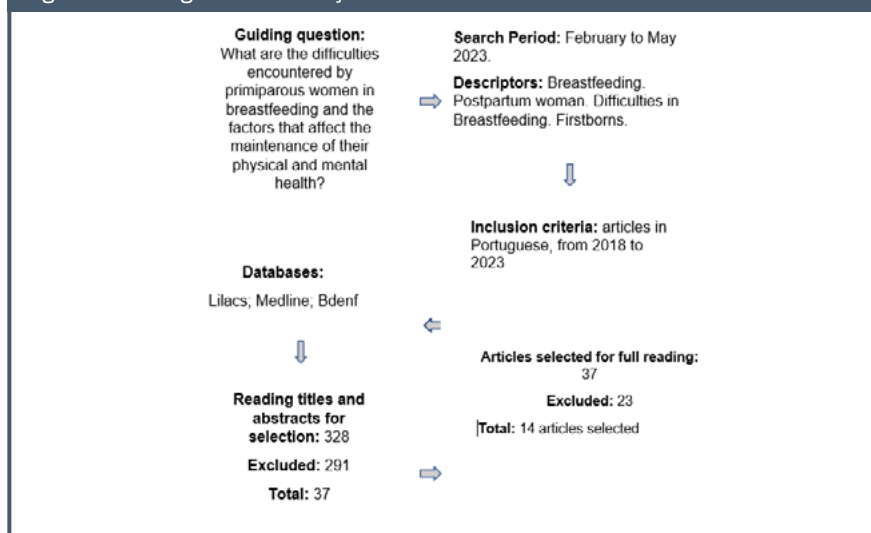
## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The articles that had data collected, referring to the studies analyzed, were classified by title, year, author, type of study and periodical of publication; then, a summary table was created with the data collected. To carry out the data analysis, a complete reading of 37 articles was carried out, in addition to using the thematic content analysis technique by re-reading the results of the studies, seeking to identify relevant aspects and convergence between them (Figure 1).

## RESULTS

Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria described in the methodology, the final sample consisted of 14 selected articles. The majority of studies were published in 2018 and 2019, corresponding to a total of 65%; the remaining articles were published from 2020 onwards. (Table 1). The analysis carried out made it possible to identify the difficulties encountered by primiparous women in breastfeeding and the factors that affect the maintenance of their physical and mental health.

Figura 1. Fluxograma da seleção amostral dos estudos incluídos na revisão:



Fonte: dados da pesquisa, 2023.

## DISCUSSION

Analyzing the information available in reference publications, it appears that among the factors that make breastfeeding difficult, nipple injuries or cracks, incorrect attachment and problems with breast milk production can be highlighted. On the other hand, the main influences on the success of breastfeeding are related to the support of family members and people close to the postpartum woman, as well as the work of the nursing team throughout the process involving breastfeeding.

Nipple cracks or fissures are injuries to the epithelial tissue that surrounds the nipple. According to a study carried out from June to November 2012 at the University Hospital of the University of São Paulo with 1689 parturient women, it shows that 55.5% of women who have recently given birth end up being affected by lesions on their nipples. However, while women in their second birth or more present injuries in less than half of the cases, there is an incidence of more than 60% in first-time mothers; which occurs mainly due to inexperience and the first exposure of the nipple tissue to suction (CIRICO et al, 2017).

Regarding the delay in production or lack of milk, we must consider the physiological process called gestation, which normally

takes between three or four days to occur thanks to the hormonal phenomena occurring in the postpartum woman's body. This information is unknown to most women and ends up harming the breastfeeding process. (BRAZIL, 1999)

During this period, the first liquid that descends is colostrum, which is ideal and sufficient for the newborn's nutrition. From that moment on, milk production depends on several factors such as nutrition, rest and emotional health of the mother, but mainly the correct attachment, stimulation of the nipples during sucking and emptying of the breasts, actions that increasingly stimulate the production of breast milk. Premature births and obesity can also interfere with milk letdown. Breast stimulation with frequent baby sucking or manual expression helps prevent this problem. (GÓES et al, 2021)

Some babies show greater difficulty in starting breastfeeding. Because both the woman and the baby are adapting to feedings. The causes may be due to the wrong grip or position of the child or the use of bottle nipples and pacifiers. The child may also have difficulty cupping the areola correctly when the breast is too large, too full, hard, or when the nipple is inverted or flat. It is also important to evaluate the lingual frenulum, which can interfere with breastfeeding. Incorrect

# Revisão de Literatura EN

Cardoso BS, Garcia IE, Santos DC, Félix EM, Rodrigues LP, Silva MM, Cardoso AMR, Pereira MWM  
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Table 1. Presents the analysis of studies according to: title, author, year, type of study and publication.

TITLE	AUTHOR	YEAR	TYPE OF STUDY	JOURNAL
Conhecimentos e Dificuldades das Mães face à Amamentação	Andrade LVFS.	2018	Investigação Empírica	Revista Escola Superior de Saúde Viseu
Maternidade e amamentação: identidade, corpo e gênero	Giordani RCF, Piccoli D, Bezerra I, Almeida CCB.	2018	Ensaio Teórico	Associação Brasileira de Saúde Coletiva
Facilidade e dificuldade encontradas pelas puérperas para amamentar	Urbanetto PDG, Gomes GC, Costa AR, Nobre CMG, Xavier DM, Jung BC.	2018	Pesquisa descritiva exploratória qualitativa	Revista Online de Pesquisa
Dificuldades iniciais com a técnica de amamentação e fatores associados a problemas com mama em puérpura	Barbosa GEF, Silva VB, Pereira JM, Soares MS, Filho RAM, Pereira LB, Pinho L, Caldeira AP.	2018	Estudo transversal, observacional e analítico	Revista Paulista de Pediatria
Práticas e crenças populares associadas ao desmame precoce	Oliveira AKP, Melo RA, Maciel LP, Tavares AK, Amando AR, Sena CRS.	2018	Estudo descritivo qualitativo	Avances em Enfermeria
Atuação do enfermeiro no manejo clínico da amamentação: estratégias para o aleitamento materno	Costa EFG, Alves VH, Souza RMP, Rodrigues DP, Santos MV, Oliveira FL.	2018	Pesquisa descritiva exploratória	Revista Online de Pesquisa
Fatores associados à auto-eficácia da amamentação segundo os tipos de mamilos	Pitilin EB, Polleto M, Gasparin VA, Oliveira PP, Sbardelotto T, Schirmer J.	2019	Estudo Transversal	Revista Rene
Transtorno mental no puérpero: riscos e mecanismos de enfrentamento para a promoção da saúde	Maciel LP, Costa JCC, Campor GMB, Santos NM, Melo RA, Diniz LFB	2019	Estudo Transversal	Rev Fun Care Online
Dificuldade no aleitamento materno nos primeiros dias de vida do recém-nascido	Oliveria T.R	2020	Pesquisa qualitativa descritiva	Repositório digital - Lume UFRGS
Avaliação do diagnóstico de enfermagem amamentação ineficaz em puérperas	Morais EPAM, Mangueira SO, Perrelli JGA, Rodrigues BHX, Gomes RCM	2020	Estudo Transversal	Revista Cubana de Enfermeria
Estratégia e ações do enfermeiro no incentivo ao aleitamento materno: revisão integrativa	Viana MDZS, Donaduzzi DSS, Rosa AB, Fettermann FA	2021	Revisão Integrativa	Revista Online de Pesquisa
Dificuldade no aleitamento materno exclusivo no alojamento conjunto: revisão integrativa	Bicalho CV, Martins CV, Friche AAL, Motta AL	2021	Revisão Integrativa	Audiology - Communication Research
Boas práticas no cuidado ao recém-nascido com boa vitalidade na sala de parto: uma revisão integrativa	Góes FGB, Ledo BC, Santos AST, Bastos MPC, Silva ACSS, Pereira-Ávila FMV	2021	Revisão Integrativa	Revista Online de Pesquisa
Estratégia de promoção do aleitamento materno e fatores associados ao desmame precoce	Dias EG, Sena EPFR, Sampaio SR, Bardaquim VA, Camps LM, Araújo RA	2022	Estudo discritivo qualitativo	Journal Health NPEPS

latch-on is one of the main aggravating factors because in addition to causing injuries as previously discussed, it also harms the production and release of breast milk as well as the satisfaction of the nursing mother (URBANETTO et al, 2018).

To analyze whether the latch is being carried out satisfactorily, it is necessary to observe how the suction is occurring. It should be checked whether the newborn is performing long sucks, mixed with pauses and shorter sucks, in addition to checking whether swallowing is occurring. The baby must grasp the entire areola and not just the nipple. Remembering that the correct latch does not cause pain, which is an indication that the breastfeeding position is incorrect. It is also important to evaluate the lingual frenulum, which can interfere with breastfeeding (URBANETTO et al, 2018)

There are different positions for breastfeeding, the woman can be sitting, lying down, lying down or any other position that is pleasant, familiar and more appropriate for the moment. Mother and child must be comfortable, the baby's body facing the mother's body, the child's head and body aligned. The breastfeeding mother must support the baby well, placing the child's face close to and facing the breast. Avoid using bottle nipples, silicone and pacifiers as much as possible. If your breasts are large, the ideal is to use support. While the child has difficulty sucking, you can empty the milk from the breast manually and offer it to the baby in a cup or spoon. This will help with milk production until the child can suckle again. Diagnosis and guidance from a nursing professional during the baby's first feeding and checking tongue-tie are essential to identify the reasons that make breastfeeding difficult and the most appropriate behavior (ANDRADE et al, 2018).

When the nipple is flat or inverted it can make breastfeeding difficult. In this case, we must help the baby to grasp the nipple and areola and try different positions to make latching easier. If the breasts are very full at the time of breastfeeding, it is recommended to massage them for a little milk so that the areola becomes softer and makes it easier for the baby to latch on. (SALES et al, 2017)

Through research carried out by Maciel (2019), the factors that affect the physical and mental health of postpartum women begin with the physical and hormonal changes during this period, adding social issues such as planning and desire for pregnancy, as well as early pregnancy, gestational risk, age extremes, cultural aspects, socio economic issues, partner and family support, adaptation capacity and resilience. The low socioeconomic status of the postpartum woman and some aspects such as marital status and who they live with, are risk factors that determine the well-being of your mental health, as in many cases coexistence does not have a beneficial influence during this period, due to the lack of family support at critical moments.

Factors such as complications during pregnancy, reasons for anxiety, fears and excessive concern about the health and well-being of the baby are related to potential risks in the generation of some mental disorder in the postpartum period. The difficulty of dealing with the judgments made by society regarding the "mistakes" made by these women or the negative feelings produced can generate tension and unresolved conflicts, resulting in inadequate coping and contributing to the emergence of disorders that generate fear, anguish and sadness in postpartum women. (MACIEL et al, 2019)

According to Viana (2021), Another aspect that influences the success of breastfeeding is family support as a strategy in the breastfeeding process. It is clear that this act is not an easy task, as it usually ends up being influenced by society. The sociocultural context experienced by the first-time mother sometimes overlaps with the biological foundations involved in breastfeeding. Therefore, the support of family and friends is a fundamental help for the continuation of breastfeeding.

Through this support network for breastfeeding women, it is possible to obtain better results, thus reducing anxiety and stress, providing security, psychological tranquility and comfort for the nursing mother, as well as increasing their understanding of breastfeeding. Family collaboration to promote, protect and support breastfeeding is

essential for the woman's persistence in breastfeeding, and is therefore one of the main responsibilities of the people who live with this woman, provide a peaceful and comfortable environment, which can stimulate the bond between the mother and her baby (VIANA et al, 2021).

Also noteworthy is the nurse's assistance in the strategy and emotional support, which demonstrates an important action in search of the best results in the practice of breastfeeding. The nursing team is extremely important for promoting and supporting breastfeeding among women in labor, providing support so that they can be successful in breastfeeding their child. The use of non-verbal language by nurses should be part of their role, guiding the clinical management of breastfeeding, noting that emotional support represents an important strategy for building successful breastfeeding (COSTA et al, 2018).

Nurses need to be aware of their importance in care and education, acting with interest, responsibility and commitment in accordance with the guidelines of professional practice. Identifying the obstacles and difficulties faced by the mother during this stage constitutes one of the main attributes in the clinical management of breastfeeding, where the nurse must provide guidance on the advantages and importance of breastfeeding on demand, types of nipples that can be normal, flat or inverted, directly interfering in the act of breastfeeding, addressing the correct latch and position of the baby, the frequency of feedings, manual milking and all other difficulties that the professional may witness (COSTA et al, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

Considering all the factors that involve breastfeeding, it is worth mentioning the importance of nursing professionals for the success of this stage, therefore, it is essential that they receive frequent training and qualifica-

tions, so that they are always up to date, so that they can provide correct and appropriate guidance to the postpartum woman and her loved ones.

The support and guidance provided by health professionals to pregnant women, in relation to breastfeeding, are of great importance and must occur since prenatal care, whether through collective or individualized guidance. It is worth mentioning that people with ties to women must be included to also receive this guidance, therefore, a link of encouragement and support in times of

difficulty is essential.

O aconselhamento qualificado sobre o aleitamento materno, o acesso a orientações corretas e a desmistificação dos tabus que cercam a amamentação podem tornar o período de amamentar mais duradouro e prazeroso. Assim, ressalta-se a importância da realização do pré-natal como estratégia indispensável para a gestante receber orientações seguras e confiáveis em relação à amamentação, reforçando ainda como sendo fundamental a continuidade da assistência nos ciclos posteriores ao parto.

Por isso vale seguir os cuidados apresentados neste estudo, que são recomendados pelo ministério da saúde a respeito dos principais problemas ocorridos durante a amamentação.

Independente da situação, destaco que a mulher precisa e deve receber todo o apoio necessário da família, da sua rede de amigos e dos profissionais de saúde para obter sucesso e realização pessoal no processo do aleitamento materno.

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