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Breastfeeding: the challenge of the working mother who breastfeeds in a capitalist society

Lactancia materna: el desafío de la madre trabajadora que amamanta en una sociedad capitalista

Aleitamento materno: o desafio da mãe trabalhadora que amamenta em uma sociedade capitalista

ABSTRACT

The article discusses the challenges and confrontations imposed on the working woman, mother, who wants to breastfeed her baby in a Capitalist Society. The research method carried out was the bibliographic study of qualitative contribution, in the period of July and August 2020. The search for the material used to support the study was through the database of SciELO, Rev. Saúde Pública and in normative frameworks on the "Breastfeeding" theme published in Portuguese between 1997 and 2017. The results indicate that employers who respect the Laws that benefit working mothers, offer them an appropriate place for the custody of their babies and facilitate the breastfeeding of their children in the workplace, have employees who have fewer absences, show greater interest in developing their activities and have, as a result, a higher productivity index, as they do not have to worry about their sick babies.

DESCRIPTORS: Breastfeeding; Working woman; Social responsibility; Capitalist society.

RESUMEN

El artículo analiza los desafíos y enfrentamientos que se le imponen a la mujer trabajadora, madre, que quiere amamantar a su bebé en una Sociedad Capitalista. El método de investigación realizado fue el estudio bibliográfico de aportación cualitativa, en el período de julio y agosto de 2020. La búsqueda del material utilizado para sustentar el estudio fue a través de la base de datos de SciELO, Rev. Saúde Pública y en marcos normativos sobre la Tema "Lactancia Materna" publicado en portugués entre 1997 y 2017. Los resultados indican que los empleadores que respetan las Leyes que benefician a las madres trabajadoras, les ofrecen un lugar adecuado para la custodia de sus bebés y facilitan la lactancia materna de sus hijos en el lugar de trabajo, tienen empleados que tienen menos ausencias, muestran mayor interés en desarrollar sus actividades y tienen, como resultado, un mayor índice de productividad, ya que no tienen que preocuparse por sus bebés enfermos.

DESCRIPTORES: Amamantamiento; Mujer trabajadora; Responsabilidad social; Sociedad capitalista.

RESUMO

O artigo discorre sobre os desafios e enfrentamentos impostos à mulher trabalhadora, mãe, que deseja amamentar seu bebê em uma Sociedade Capitalista. O método de pesquisa realizado foi o estudo bibliográfico de aporte qualitativo, no período de julho e agosto de 2020. A busca do material utilizado para fundamentar ao estudo foi através da base de dados do SciELO, Rev. Saúde Pública e em marcos normativos sobre o tema "Amamentação" publicados em português entre os anos de 1997 a 2017. Os resultados apontam que os empregadores que respeitam as Leis que beneficiam as mães trabalhadoras, oferecem a elas local apropriado para a guarda de seus bebês e facilitam a amamentação de seus filhos no local de trabalho, contam com funcionárias que apresentam menor número de faltas, demonstram maior interesse em desenvolver suas atividades e apresentam como resultado, maior índice de produtividade, pois não precisam se preocupar com seus bebês doentes.

DESCRIPTORES: Aleitamento materno; Mulher trabalhadora; Responsabilidade Social; Sociedade Capitalista.

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the performance and contribution of women and mothers inserted in the capitalist society, is already a fact that is notably proven in relation to the benefits directed to the growth, economic and social development of our country. However, the woman, mother who breastfeeds her baby, is forced to wean early, as she is forced to perform her work activities outside her home, especially those who live in urban centers, due to the precarious conditions of transportation and even , the distance traveled between the home and the workplace.¹

However, it should be noted that exclusive breastfeeding of the newborn up to six months of age is very important. The fact is widely recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) Non-governmental institutions and bodies that study and disseminate issues related to breastfeeding are unanimous in stating that, in the baby's first year of life, breastfeeding is essential, however, it should extend preferably, until the child is two or more years old.²

Breastfeeding, in addition to bringing benefits to the child's health, by reducing the appearance of pathologies, also decreases the family's financial expenses and also brings economic benefits to companies, as it reduces the absence of working mothers at work.³

In this sense, it is necessary to remember that in art. 396 of the Consolidation of Labor Laws - (Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho) CLT, ensures that mothers who want to feed their child, up to 1 full year of age, have the following right: "the woman will have the right, during the working day, to 2 (two) special rests, half an hour each (...)"⁴ However, in "§ 1 of art. 389, this requirement only applies to establishments in which at least thirty women over sixteen years of age work, which already exempts a large part of companies".⁵

In fact, the ideal and desirable would be that all mothers could breastfeed their babies up to six months of age, without

interruption, but we know that this is not always possible. Working mothers, who live far from their work and who do not have the support of any family member to take the baby to their work environment, need to leave their children in daycare centers or with someone they trust and, thus, replace breastfeeding, bottle, teats and other foods.⁶

Companies that do not encourage or support women workers failing to offer them the conditions to continue breastfeeding, harm both the health of the mother and the baby, and, as a result, economic and financial losses are observed for all parties involved, since the family, the State and companies must assume their social responsibility.⁷

Given the above, the central question to be problematized is: What are the confrontations and challenges of the working woman, mother, who wants to breastfeed her child in a capitalist society?

METHOD

This is a brief bibliographic study of qualitative contribution, carried out in the period of July and August 2020. The search for the material used to substantiate and support the study was through the database of SciELO, Rev. Saúde Pública and in milestones regulations on the topic "Breastfeeding" published in Portuguese between 1997 and 2017.

For Gil (2002), the research is characterized as bibliographic because there is a case study, which can be defined by the search for reliable materials, such as: articles and books that have already been produced by the scientific community.⁸

Richardson (2008) says that qualitative studies can describe the complexity of a given problem, analyze the interaction of certain variables, understand and classify dynamic processes experienced by social groups, contribute to the process of changing a certain group and enable the understanding of the particularities of behavior, the individuals and the owners of the means of production - who work in the companies.⁹

It is important to note that the choice of the bibliographic and qualitative method facilitates the search for input by the researcher, however, it becomes a challenge, since the choice of material may or may not guarantee the success of the research.

The importance of breastfeeding

Breast milk is the best food the baby can receive. It is rich in nutrients, of rapid digestion and provides healthy growth and development, in addition to protecting the baby against various types of diseases. Even if the mother breastfeeds in humid or dry environments, breast milk provides all the liquid vitamins the baby needs.

Entretanto, a gestante precisa se alimentar bem e estimular o bico do seio durante toda a gestação, e assim, terá todas as condições para realizar a amamentação, todavia, para isso aconteça, ela precisa receber orientação durante o pré-natal.

The responsibilities are many, due to the commitment of breastfeeding, and this makes it difficult for mothers to be absent for long hours or days, because if they stop breastfeeding for a long period, milk production ceases to be stimulated and the milk gradually disappears. Evidently, this depends on each case, as each organism reacts differently, so breastfeeding requires responsibility and continuity.

However, the rewards are valuable, when the mother is able to reach the dimension of the precious inheritance that she leaves to her child through her milk. It is in fact the purest and richest food of affection that we need throughout our lives.

Breastfeeding mothers see their babies grow with less risk of allergies, and they, in turn, are less likely to develop obesity, high cholesterol, different types of diabetes and high blood pressure. It also prevents breast cancer and strengthens the relationship between mother and baby, without the need to use a nipple to calm the baby.

Therefore, it is common to see mothers using the beak to calm the child. The beak becomes, a "shut-up" that soothes and the baby sleeps. However, using a nozzle for these purposes is detrimental to the cor-

rect development of the jaw. Babies who suck nipples are more likely to use orthodontic appliances. And, in addition to all these health aspects, breastfeeding establishes the pure affective bond and immeasurable exchanges of true love between the mother and her child. In addition, all mothers, whether at work, at home or elsewhere, have the right to breastfeed their baby, without being interrupted or embarrassed by this act. All, without exception, must be respected, helped and encouraged to breastfeed. And to make them feel safe and comfortable they deserve to receive all information about breastfeeding. The information encourages and encourages women to want to breastfeed. In addition, it makes this experience more planned, desired, peaceful and pleasant.

Postpartum rights to breastfeeding

Law No. 13,436 / 2017 (Brazil, 2017)¹⁰ determines that all parturients have the right to receive specialized technical monitoring of breastfeeding while in the hospital. These guidelines are essential, especially for mothers who are going through their first pregnancy, as they often feel insecure, and are afraid of not producing enough milk, or even that the milk is weak. There is no weak milk or breast without a nipple, yes, there are breasts that have not been stimulated for breastfeeding, and this has implications, as the baby will have difficulties in getting it, but even so, if women are well oriented, there is still a solution. The aided mother calms down and the baby learns to suck and adjust the speed of sucking.¹¹

In this sense, Law No. 8069/1990 (Statute of Children and Adolescents), in its Article 9, says: "The public authorities, institutions and employers will provide adequate conditions for breastfeeding, including the children of mothers subjected to measure deprivation of liberty" (Brasil, 1990).¹²

Therefore, as we can see, all mothers are guaranteed the right to breastfeed their children. Whether at work, at home or even, when they are for some reason, deprived of their freedom, they have the

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right to feed their baby without being interrupted, embarrassed or disturbed.

Ensuring and encouraging breastfeeding - duty of the Family, Society and the State

Article 227 of the 1988 Federal Constitution guarantees that it is "the duty of the family, society and the State to ensure the right to life, health, and food for children, adolescents and young people (...)" (Brazil, 1988).¹³

Many mothers sometimes choose not to breastfeed, because they faithfully believe in popular myths such as: the breast will fall or become weak and unable to do other activities. However, other mothers cancel this moment because they need to work and cannot breastfeed their baby due to different circumstances, such as the distance between work and their homes and, due to lack of financial resources, lack of family support or the company where they work. If it is a small business, the difficulties only increase, as there is no legal obligation, and the boss sometimes aims only at profit. With this in mind, Marx (2004) states:

As the number of women, working mothers in the labor market decreases, as they usurp and monopolize all the advantages of this period of social evolution, misery, oppression, slavery and exploitation grow. "The appropriation of work and the centralization of its material resources has reached a point where this wrapper will break into pieces" (MARX, 2004, p. 97-98).¹⁴

In this sense, many bosses prefer to hire male workers, taking into account that the woman may have the period of pregnancy, and will need to leave, and still followed by the breastfeeding period, the right guaranteed by law.

Research shows that the breastfeeding rate (exclusive) up to six months in Brazil is 39%. The average breastfeeding in the country shows that, hardly, mothers complete two months, when the necessary would be six months of exclusive breastfeeding for the baby. These data are regrettable results of the absence of public policies that guarantee the rights of working wo-

men, either with small or large companies or through basic resources such as: lack of hiring, by the State, of more professionals in the health area, and thus be able to offer continuous training to these professionals in order to enable care for pregnant women about breastfeeding and its benefits.

It is necessary to say that in health posts, professionals in the area, due to work overload and lack of servers, are often unable to form groups of pregnant women to pass the necessary clarifications on the necessary procedures for breastfeeding to the future mother.

The lack of encouragement and resources from the family members, when this mother needs to go back to work at the end of her maternity leave, as many of them do not have anyone to help them, or who takes responsibility for taking and bringing the baby to her place every day. workplace so that she can feed her baby, without worrying about commuting or the distance between work and home, is certainly one of the biggest factors in abandoning breastfeeding to their babies.

We constantly hear on social media the industries that produce complementary foods by broadcasting various fetishes and misleading advertisements that reinforce the false information that milk is weak and the mother needs to replace it with more effective products. There is no weak milk, which exists most of the time, mothers with few resources and no information, greedy bosses who do not collaborate, and thus, in despair and the need to keep their jobs to survive, they cut off the child's right to be breastfed.

As Souza and Rodrigues (2010, p. 38) assure us: "The consolidation of women in the labor market is revealed in the constant expansion of female participation rates at all ages, thus increasing the weight of women in the workforce".¹⁵ This reality requires companies that are well prepared to consistently assist all mothers who want to breastfeed their children, without being harmed, but rather encouraged and helped in everything that is necessary to make them feel safe and well with each

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breastfeeding and thus avoid and, who knows, eradicate early weaning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was found that the Consolidation of Labor Laws (Consolidação das Leis Trabalhistas - CLT) requires companies that employ more than 30 working mothers over the age of 16 to maintain an exclusive breastfeeding support room. Mothers who live far from their place of work or the nursery where they leave their baby face many challenges to continue breastfeeding, and therefore, many of them need to abandon breastfeeding. However, several factors can contribute to the abandonment of breastfeeding to happen, because even though breastfeeding children presents itself as a natural characteristic of the human species, in contemporary times, and, in a capitalist society, breastfeeding children is configured in a social practice, poorly structured and very complex, and among them is the lack of compliance by companies with "§ 1 of art. 389 of the CLT, and of art. 396 (Brazil 2016)¹⁶ which obliges them to make their mother's working hours more flexible. In addition, there is a need for a serious review of the operating policy of companies with less than 30 employees regarding the practice of breastfeeding, as many of them oblige mothers who need to keep their jobs, to introduce complementary foods before six months, one of the main factors for the discontinuation of breastfeeding. On the other hand, mothers who insist on giving the beak to calm the child, also influence the baby at early weaning.

CONCLUSION

Breastfeeding is an experience full of affection, health and a lot of love. It is at this moment that the relationship between mother and child is established, bonds are formed and trust is established. The bonds built through breastfeeding accompany the mother and child throughout their lives. Therefore, breastfeeding is cer-

tainly the greatest link that can exist between mother and child.

Breast milk is not insufficient or weak. It is pure, complete and rich in nutrients, loaded with affection and love! In fact, when the baby cries, he doesn't just want to be fed, he wants to nurture him to feel safe.

The results of the research show that

employers who respect the labor laws that benefit women, mothers, and offer them an appropriate place for breastfeeding and custody of their babies, facilitate breastfeeding for their children, have employees with fewer numbers absences, show greater interest in developing their activities and have a higher productivity index, as they do not have

to worry about their sick babies.

Finally, public and private companies that offer health insurance and daycare centers in the workplace, in addition to allowing proximity between mother and child, encourage and guarantee breastfeeding for a longer period, bringing economic and social benefits to all parties involved. ■

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