

Cuidado de enfermagem sobre a importância do Aleitamento Materno exclusivo: percepção de puérperas.

Nursing care about the importance of exclusive Breastfeeding: perception of mothers.

Cuidados de enfermería sobre la importancia de la Lactancia Materna exclusiva: los madres percepción.

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RESUMO: O estudo tem como objetivo investigar a percepção de puérperas do cuidado de enfermagem prestado no pré-natal sobre a importância do aleitamento materno exclusivo. O local do estudo foi um hospital de referência da região norte do estado do Ceará. Para o desenvolvimento dessa pesquisa, optou-se por uma abordagem qualitativa do tipo descritiva-exploratória, com aplicação de entrevista semiestruturada à 15 puérperas. A investigação foi realizada durante o período de agosto e setembro de 2013 e a discussão dos resultados seguiu os passos da análise temática de Minayo (2010). Os achados apontaram que existe um conhecimento natural sobre aleitamento materno exclusivo por parte das puérperas, mas que ainda existem dúvidas acerca deste tema. Percebeu-se que são poucas as orientações oferecidas sobre o aleitamento materno durante a consulta de pré-natal, e que na percepção e no conhecimento das puérperas a equipe acaba deixando algumas lacunas nestas orientações. Foi constatado que as puérperas reconhecem a importância das

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informações recebidas na realização da consulta de pré-natal e que estas mesmas são de grande valia para elas. Os depoimentos contribuíram para promover a reflexão sobre o trabalho oferecido, e quanto a futuras mudanças nos cuidados prestadas pela equipe de enfermagem nas consultas de pré-natal.

Palavras-chave: Aleitamento materno; Cuidado Pré-natal; Período pós-parto; Pesquisa qualitativa.

RESUME: The study aims to investigate the perception of mothers about the nursing care given prenatal about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding. The study site was a referral hospital in the northern region in the state of Ceará. For the development of this research, an exploratory-descriptive qualitative approach type was chosen, with semi-structured interview that was applied to 15 mothers. The research was conducted during the period of August and September 2013 and the discussion of the results followed the steps of the thematic analysis of Minayo (2010). The findings showed that there is a natural understanding of exclusive breastfeeding by the mothers, but there are still doubts on the subject. It was noticed that there is little information offered about breastfeeding during prenatal consultation, and that the perception and knowledge of the mothers, the nursing staff ends up leaving some gaps in information that is passed on the orientation. It was realized that the mothers recognize the importance of information received in the understanding of prenatal consultation and that the same are of great value to them. The testimonials contributed to promoting reflection on the work offered, and future changes in the care provided by the nursing team in prenatal consultations.

Keywords: Breastfeeding; Prenatal Care; Postpartum period; Qualitative research.

RESUMEN: El estudio tiene como objetivo investigar la percepción de los cuidados de enfermería de las madres dado prenatal sobre la importancia de la lactancia materna exclusiva. El sitio de estudio fue un hospital de referencia en el nortño estado de Ceará. Para el desarrollo de esta investigación, se optó por un enfoque cualitativo de tipo descriptivo y exploratorio, con entrevista semiestructurada que se aplicó a 15 madres. La investigación se realizó durante el período de agosto y septiembre de 2013 y la discusión de los resultados siguió los pasos del análisis temático de Minayo (2010). Los resultados mostraron que existe una comprensión natural de la lactancia materna exclusiva por las madres, pero todavía hay dudas sobre el tema. Se observó que hay algunas pautas que se ofrecen sobre la lactancia materna durante la consulta prenatal, y que la percepción y conocimiento del equipo de madres termina dejando algunas lagunas en estas directrices. Se encontró que las madres reconocen la importancia de la información recibida en la realización de la consulta prenatal y que el mismo son de gran valor para ellos. Los testimonios han contribuido a la promoción de la reflexión sobre el trabajo ofrecido, qué pasa con los futuros cambios en la atención recibida por el equipo de enfermería en las consultas prenatales.

Palabras clave: La lactancia materna; Cuidado Prenatal; Período posparto; Invetigación Cualitativa.

INTRODUCTION

Breastfeeding is important for the health of the baby and the mother, being an act that enhances benefits for both. Breastfeeding promotes the establishment of an emotional connection, very strong and precocious, between mother and child, as well as provide an adequate diet for the newborn, although many children in the world do not grow and develop properly because of difficulties in exclusive breastfeeding. Therefore, this practice presents itself as one of the main challenges in global health¹.

In Brazil, the Ministry of Health indicates low rates of breastfeeding mothers, even with the health system following the recommendations of the World Health Organization: exclusive breastfeeding until six months of age, and associated with other foods until two or more years of life of the child²⁻³. To encourage this practice, it was created the National Policy of Breastfeeding, which aims to promote, protect and support breastfeeding⁴.

With a view to the importance of the practice of breastfeeding and considering the high number of women who opt for another method, or drop out of exclusive breastfeeding for difficulties that arise during the first six months of the infant's life, it is fundamental to identify the determinants factors in the choice and persistence of exclusive breastfeeding in the mentioned period. Knowing the influential aspects in this process, it is possible that health professionals reorganize their practices, focusing on efforts on appropriate actions and with greater results in enhancement of exclusive breastfeeding rates⁵⁻⁶.

Despite the scientific advance and efforts of many national and international organisms, actions that aim to promote breastfeeding in primary care are being implemented, however, the duration of breastfeeding in Brazil has not yet reached the recommended, especially concerning to exclusive breastfeeding⁴.

Breastfeeding cannot be reduced to a health action, since it is a social practice permeated by representations and values, different, per the cultural integration of active individuals in the situation⁷⁻⁸. It is important to pay attention to this when planning the promotion goals of breastfeeding that the Ministry of Health advocates⁴.

The premature disruption of breastfeeding creates risks for children, especially for those families of low acquisitive power, because many of the foods that become part of their diet is inadequate from a nutritional point of view and also, for age, so the probability of diarrheal episodes increases considerably with the use of maternal milk subsidies as a result of exposure to infectious organisms. The smaller the child and the greater the period of breastfeeding, the greater the protection provided by breast milk, and lower the chances of this child to have malnutrition⁹.

Among the professionals of the Family Health Strategy (FHS), the nurse must be prepared to handle and direct a diversified demand, especially when it comes to pregnant and postpartum

women, as the nurse should be able to identify and maximize educational moments, encouraging breast-feeding¹⁰.

Based on the above and considering the need to deepen the knowledge about the role of nurses during the prenatal in exclusive breastfeeding promoting, especially from the perspective of women in puerperal state, came the interest in conducting this study.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the mothers' perception of the nursing care given in the prenatal about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

It is a study of exploratory and descriptive sort, with qualitative approach¹¹. The study was conducted in a philanthropic Hospital, located in the North Region of the state of Ceará, Brazil, which constitutes part of the Unified Health System (SUS) through the provision of health services to 55 municipalities, and is considered a reference in high risk in obstetrics.

The research weaves as subject mothers who were hospitalized in the accommodation room. It was adopted as inclusion criteria: mothers attended by SUS and who had carried out at least six prenatal visits, minimum number of visits recommended by the Ministry of Health and, as a criterion for exclusion, under 18 and that reported cognitive impairment. After the application of the established criteria, our sample was defined as 15 mothers of different municipalities by the saturation of informations¹².

Data collection was performed by means of semi-structured interview technique type, in 2013, in the months of August and September, during three consecutive weeks, in the evening. To guide the discussion, the following questions were addressed: what are the benefits of breastfeeding for you and your baby?; did you receive guidance during prenatal care, about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding?; how the nurses performed the orientation/stimulation to the practice of exclusive breastfeeding until the sixth month of life?; and what could you talk about the importance of the guidelines given in prenatal consultations?

We emphasize that the completion time of the interviews contributed to a better dialogue with the mothers, as the sector was calm and quiet. Each interview lasted on average 30 minutes and was held next to the participant's bed.

For the treatment of empirical material, a thematic analysis of Minayo¹¹ was adopted, which includes the following steps: pre-analysis, material exploration, treatment of results, inference and interpretation, which generated the following categories: Breastfeeding Benefits for Mother/Baby, nursing guidelines on breastfeeding during prenatal care and Stimulation to the practice of breastfeeding. The analysis was made possible in the light of the Brazilian scientific productions on the subject.

The research was authorized by the Ethics in Research Committee of the State University of Vale do Acaraú with opinion n°. 352,806, following this way all the principles of Resolution n°. 466/12 of the National Health Council. In this way, participants have signed an Informed Consent Form and, to ensure anonymity, participants were identified by the letter “P” as in puerperal, followed by arabic numerals corresponding to the chronological order of the interviews.

RESULTS

The age group of women participating in this study ranged from 18 to 42 years, being observed an average of 27 years old. Regarding marital status, 12 women reported stable union, while three of them didn't live with a partner.

Regarding the education of the interviewees, one had higher education, two had high school, seven had elementary school and five still were enrolled in elementary school. Among the interviewed only two reported having a paid job, working in agriculture, while thirteen were housewives. As for family income, 10 reported a variation of a salary and a half to two minimum wages. The other had a higher income than two minimum wages.

All interviewees accomplished regular monitoring during pregnancy and the number of visits ranged from six to nine appearances to the health unit.

The results achieved allowed an analysis of important questions about the perception of mothers on the importance of breastfeeding, in accordance with reports and comments below.

Breastfeeding Benefits for Mother/Baby

This category includes information obtained from the first question, *What are the benefits of breastfeeding for you and your baby?* which allowed the following statements:

I know it is a source of vitamin for the baby and it must be given until the age of six months to a year. Just that. [P1]

I know that breastfeeding is very important for the baby to give calcium, isn't it? Also, fortifying, isn't it? For his little teeth to be born perfect and also in case of illness. What I understand is that it is very useful for children. [P2]

It is very important for the baby, it has too much vitamin for children, that breastfeeding is great, it is the key to the baby. [P3]

It was verified that mothers associate the practice of breastfeeding only for the health of the baby. This statement was perceived in the reports:

It's a healthy milk for children, which has vitamin, right? We have to breastfeed our baby until the age of six months. What I understand is that he is strong, healthy, right? As for me, I don't know. [P1]

That it brings health to him [...]. For me I do not know [P12]

The baby's proximity to the mother, it brings health to him. [P10]

Breastfeeding goes beyond an ideal feeding for the baby, because it is an essential source of nutrients for proper weight and height growth. Yet as a benefit, it contains immunologically active components that can prevent acute infectious and chronic degenerative diseases in adulthood¹². It is also verified the strengthening of the mother-child bonding in this relationship.

Nurse's guidance on breastfeeding during prenatal

In this category, mothers revealed the receipt of some form of counseling on breastfeeding and exposed what were those guidelines.

Yes, that breast milk was enough to supply the need of the child's food. [P7]

They said that breastfeeding, breast milk is good, develops the child, she never gets sick, and then will grow, developing more. Then ready, that's all. [P11]

Yes, but I should breastfeed until the age of six months without having to give other foods, pacifiers and bottles. [P13]

Some reported that they already had the intention to breastfeed and after the received orientation they increased even more this desire. This information is in the following lines:

Yes, and because it is good, we have someone to teach us and guide us especially when it is the first child that we know almost nothing about and we feel very unsafe, at least that's what happened to me when I had my first child. [P6]

Yes, and as I was! Because I want the best for my daughter [...] her health is all I want. [P14]

The nurse, as an educator, has an important and challenging role that is not only provide knowledge to the patient and his family, but to recognize the family and social context that this person is inserted in, adjusting your orientation to the singularities of subjects¹³.

Stimulus to the practice of breastfeeding

This category includes the last two made inquiries. As for the incoming directions and the stimulus for the practice of breastfeeding, it is verified through the speeches the management of professionals for the treatment of such information.

*The nurse guided me through conversation during the consultations.
[P4]*

*I didn't have a good guidance, because she only spoke because I asked.
[P8]*

Well, the nurse gave a little paper with some information which she read to me that time and talked a little bit because I asked some things. Only that. [P11]

As for the importance of the information provided during prenatal consultation, all mothers were unanimous in referring to the relevance of such information.

In my opinion, it is very important that sometimes we, we do not have our mother who may be explaining, many are inexperienced, it is the first pregnancy, we do not know, this way we get more informed, is good. [P6]

I find very important, because we learn a lot of new things [...] and all good that milk brings. [P12]

Knowing the aspects related to the practice of breastfeeding, particularly regarding benefits for women, child, family and community are key factors, to collaborate so that mother and child can experience breastfeeding effectively and peacefully, receiving from the professional the necessary and appropriate guidelines for its success¹⁴.

DISCUSSION

The promotion of exclusive breastfeeding is the isolated intervention in public health with the greatest potential for the reduction of infant mortality, as per observed with the protection of young children in more severe cases of respiratory infection. Moreover, the benefit of this practice has been extended to mothers, especially as a practice of protection the longer the breastfeeding¹⁵.

In a prospective cohort study conducted in the South of Brazil, it has shown that breastfeeding is also associated with better performance in intelligence tests 30 years later, and may have direct effects on the perception of a good quality of life by increasing educational attainment and the income in adulthood of the individual who suckled¹⁶.

Not always mothers and relatives are aware of the importance of breastfeeding for the baby. Its benefits should be discussed in the daily lives of families and health services, prioritizing the expansion of breastfeeding as a constant goal¹⁷.

Thus, by evidencing these benefits, it is noticed the favoring of the acquisition of knowledge on the subject by pregnant women, which can occur through health education, so that this practice is adhered successfully. The lack of knowledge of the mother about the quality and advantages of breast milk is referred to as a major cause for early weaning¹⁸.

However, for this practice to have a good adhesion, it is necessary that the professional has technical and scientific knowledge, clinical skills and sensitivity to promote, support and advise pregnant and postpartum women to the practice of breastfeeding, and must identify, during the prenatal, the knowledge, the practical experience, beliefs and social and family life of the pregnant woman, to foster health education that promotes meaningful learning⁷.

The health professional must demonstrate interest in the health of pregnant women, clarify their doubts and make them more confident as possible. At the end of the consultation, the professional must be available to them, if difficulties or questions that have not been addressed at that time arise¹⁹.

Being the nurse as the closest professional of women during the pregnancy-childbirth cycle, it performs an important role in health education programs, during the prenatal period. Therefore, it's necessary to prepare the mother for breastfeeding, so that in the postpartum the adjustment process is facilitated and peaceful, avoiding doubts, difficulties and possible complications²⁰.

The nurse has an important role in prevention activities and promotion of breastfeeding, and should work with home visits, lectures, support and advising groups of exclusive breastfeeding²¹.

Health education strategies are necessary because they allow the development of educational activities, promoting awareness of values related to breastfeeding by women and their families⁶.

It is perceived the need for professional efforts to clarify the importance of breastfeeding, to know the factors that may have a negative effect on breastfeeding. Some of these factors can be highlighted: lack of experience of mothers in terms of practice and belief of women in relation to breastfeeding²².

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research has emphasized that mothers had information about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding, seized during the prenatal period. In this regard, the professional role of nurse was essential, for being member of the caregiving team of the woman during her pregnancy.

It's possible to conclude that the decisive step towards the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding for mothers is the true health education. Therefore, nursing must offer women the listening time, the speaking time and the time to discuss preventive, affective, nutritional and economic breastfeeding issues, considering the biological and sociocultural aspects involved in this process, and recovering the women's role as the main subject of breastfeeding practice.

However, this study does not end here, in addition to also present limitations, since it is necessary to amplify knowledge about the performance of the nurse in the actions developed during the prenatal, so that we suggest the accomplishment of new researches with this purpose.

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