Abstract

Introduction: Exclusive breastfeeding (EB) is the nutritional gold standard of children in their 0-6 months of life and its practice is recommended in the current national plans of health, feeding and nutrition. Objective: To describe the duration of exclusive breastfeeding (EB) in a cohort of women who breastfed, from Cali, Colombia, in 2003. Methods: A cohort of 438 urban women was established, with first singleton live birth in immediate postpartum, whose childbirth was cared without complications, in one of the six institutions (4 public and 2 private) that concentrate 80% of all deliveries from the city, approximately. With the previous consent of each woman and through structured questionnaires, these women were interviewed in the first hours after postpartum; then, they were visited and a face to face interview was applied at home, at days 8, 15, 30, 60, 90, 120, 150 and 180 since the birth, until abandon of EB was identified or woman could not be found. Results: At recruitment, 15 out of 453 puerperal women captured in postpartum rooms refused to participate in the study; 38 (8.5%) women were lost during the following. At the end of the months 1°, 2°, 3°, 4°, 5° and 6°, respectively, only 28%, 15%, 9%, 5%, 2% and 1.6% of the women included to the study kept EB practice, according to the adopted criteria. Conclusion: High participation in the prenatal and delivery care of the institutions selected for this study, low lost of women during the following and broad socio-economic distribution of recruited women, allow to suggest that observations from this cohort characterise the duration of EB in 1, 2, 3 and 4 socio-economic strata of urban area of Cali, Colombia, in 2003. The duration of EB in the studied cohort is very short regarding to national and international recommendations. This fact indicates the scarce effects of both, national packages of National Security System in Health and national and local initiatives addressed to encourage EB in the city.

Keywords

Exclusive breastfeeding.
Infant nutrition. Cohort study.