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PREVALENCE OF BREASTFEEDING IN BITOLA, IN THE PERIOD 2012-2014

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Abstract

Introduction: Breastfeeding is an important psychological and biological relationship between the mother and its child and a foundation for subsequent emotional health of the child and its social adaptation.

Objectives: To determine the prevalence of breastfeeding in Bitola, in the period from 2012 to 2014, and to determine its dependency on certain demographic characteristics, national affiliation, age and education of the mother.

Materials and Methods: In a retrospective epidemiological study in the period from 2012 to 2014 all newborn children in Bitola were analyzed, regardless of birth weight and gestational maturity. The data was taken from the charts of newborns.

Results: The study included a total of 2545 newborns, 49.6% male and 50.4% female. In terms of their nationality, 85% were Macedonians, 9% Romani and 6% Albanians, Turks and children of other nationalities. In 90% of the cases the children were breastfed. The Romani mothers breastfeed their children most commonly (94%) and for the longest period of time (9 months). The frequency of breastfeeding increases with the age of the mothers, most commonly breastfed up to 6 months (34%). In terms of education most mothers had secondary education.

Conclusion: The prevalence of breastfeeding of infants in Bitola is high, especially among Romani mothers. Perhaps it is due to traditions, cultural habits and economic situation of these families. Nurses in all health institutions should promote breastfeeding in the early prenatal period as the most important biological and psychological relationship of the mother and her infant, which contributes to healthy emotional development and subsequent successful social adaptation of the children.

Keywords: Breastfeeding, Romani, age, education of the mother.