

Abstract of Master's Thesis

No.1

Course	International Health Development (MPH)	Name	Kumiko Takai
Thesis Title	Breastfeeding practices among Palestine refugees in Jordan		

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Background:

Breastfeeding has been widely considered ideal feeding method for infants' surviving, growth and development. Effects of breastfeeding last long time for their life and benefits to mothers and society as well. Over 2 million Palestine refugees live in Jordan. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is providing primary health care services to Palestine refugees, however there is insufficient scientific data on breastfeeding practices to monitor and develop support program among Palestine refugees in Jordan.

Objective:

The general objective was to describe the current breastfeeding practices among Palestine refugees in Jordan in order to provide information that promotes breastfeeding among the Palestine refugee community.

The specific objectives were: 1) to assess the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding, and the rate of early initiation of breastfeeding 2) to investigate factors associated with exclusive breastfeeding, 3) to estimate the duration of lifelong exclusive breastfeeding, and 4) to compare the breastfeeding practice between Palestine refugees living inside and outside refugee camps.

Method :

This study was cross-sectional facility based study examining exclusive breastfeeding of infants aged under 6 months, which was carried in four UNRWA area: North Amman, South Amman, Irbid and Zarqa area, in Jordan, between 27 April and 1 June 2017. The subject were Palestine refugee mothers of children aged 0 to 6 months. Quantitative method was used to collect data through face to face interview with those mothers who had infants less than 7 months at five UNRWA health centers. The questionnaires covered sociodemographic information of both mother and baby, obstetric and health related information, 24-hours recall about diet of infants, breastfeeding practices after birth, and support obtained by breastfeeding mothers.

Although it was cross sectional study, the data for 'lifelong' exclusive breastfeeding were collected retrospectively from infants' birth to the research day.

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<p>Result :</p> <p>A total of 348 participants were analyzed finally. They consisted of 110 in Zarqa area, 76 in Irbid area, 93 in North Amman and 69 in South Amman area. Prevalence of EBF among the mothers with infants aged 0 to 5 months was 32.8 %. 47.7% of the mothers among all participants started to breastfeed within one hour after delivery. In logistic regression analysis, infants' younger age was significantly associated with EBF. Mothers who were multiparous (AOR: 2.38; 95%CI: 1.23 - 4.59), not having problems with breastfeeding (AOR: 2.12; 95%CI: 1.25-3.57), and without experience of encouragement to use infant formula by others (AOR: 2.88; 95%CI: 1.46- 5.64) were more likely to breastfeed exclusively.</p> <p>It was revealed that participants faced difficulties such as feeling insufficient milk supply, infants' refusal to breastfeeding and others, from answers for reasons why mothers discontinued any breastfeeding or lifelong breastfeeding.</p> <p>There were no significant association between EBF and living in camp.</p> <p>Conclusion :</p> <p>The present study shows that a higher prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding among Palestine refugee mothers in Jordan, comparing to Jordanian mothers. However, providing adequate support, especially supporting mothers who are primipara, have problems and older infants, would improve the overall prevalence of breastfeeding. Our findings also reveal the barriers to continuation of breastfeeding, which mothers have. The author recommends professional support facilitating mothers to breastfeed with providing continuous care from antenatal to postnatal care including at delivery and preconception education at school as well as farther research to investigate knowledge and awareness on optimal breastfeeding of Palestine refugees.</p>			