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| Obstacles to breastfeeding in South Korea |
| **Background/Objectives**Breast feeding is an important health promoting and nutrition issue worldwide. It is good for the baby and mother’s health. The World Health Organization recommends 6 month breastfeeding, but in a rapidly changing society like South Korea, exclusive breast feeding period is decreasing. This study tried to figure out major factors that may impede breast feeding among mothers of new born child in Korea.**Methods**The study surveyed 1,000 mothers of infants less than 24 month old. This study was funded by UNICEF Korea. The survey was a face to face, nationwide survey conducted from May to July in 2016, covering 8 large cities and 9 provinces. The mothers responded infant feeding methods they did in the first 4 weeks and the following 23 months.**Results**About 44.2% of the respondents began breastfeeding in one hour after the birth of a child. The responding mothers’ infants were 49.8% males and 50.2% females. About 59.5% of mothers had breast fed exclusively in the first week after birth, and the rates increased later in the first month to 65.3%. After three month old, however, the breast feeding rate decreased rapidly. Exclusive breast feeding rate was 38.1% for three month olds, but it was 5.6% for 6 month olds. Statistical analysis showed breast feeding was significantly related to in-hospital care (rooming-in) at the time of delivery, and breast feeding education. Logistic regression showed that housewives were more likely than working mothers to continue breastfeeding. Breastfed in one hour after birth was the most important factor. Housing type and ownership of a house were also significantly associated with exclusive 6 month breast feeding.**Discussion**The results of this study reflected the trends of women’s lifestyle in Korea and brought some implication for the role of hospital. Increased women’s working status can impede breastfeeding practice. Lack of information and education can hinder their choice of breast feeding practice. Hospitals should provide enough education and environment for breastfeeding, as the WHO recommends Baby friendly hospital initiative. We need more workplace support system or service policy for mothers of infants.**Keywords****Exclusive breast feeding, infant feeding, rooming-in** |