

Perinatal and socioeconomic determinants of breastfeeding duration in very preterm infants

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Abstract:

Aim: To describe the impact of prematurity, size at birth, neonatal disorders and the families' socioeconomic status (SES) on breastfeeding duration in mothers of very preterm infants.

Methods: Prospective population-based cohort study. Data on breastfeeding, registered in databases in two Swedish counties in 1993-2001, were matched with data from two national registries: the Medical Birth Registry and Statistics Sweden. Mothers of 225 very preterm singleton infants were identified and included.

Results: Seventy-nine percent of the mothers breastfed at 2 months, 62% at 4 months, 45% at 6 months, 22% at 9 months and 12% at 12 months. Prematurity, size at birth and neonatal disorders did not show an effect on breastfeeding duration. Being adversely exposed to any of the SES factors (maternal education, unemployment benefit, social welfare and equivalent disposable income in the household) was significantly associated with earlier weaning up to 6 months of infants' postnatal age.

Conclusions: This study shows new and noteworthy results concerning breastfeeding duration in mothers of very preterm infants, which was not influenced by degree of prematurity, size at birth or neonatal disorders but was affected by SES. This highlights the need for improved support of socioeconomically disadvantaged mothers, during and after the hospital stay.

Keywords: [Breastfeeding](#); [Neonatal care](#); [Preterm](#); [Register](#); [Socioeconomic status](#); [Sweden](#)