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# Breastfeeding: Social and medical support in Ukraine

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**Background**

Breastfeeding is considered to be the best way to feed babies. According to WHO recommendations, exclusive breastfeeding is recommended up to 6 months, and continued breastfeeding up to 2 years. Women motivation to breastfeed is often facilitated by the support of family, friends and health professionals.

**Objective**

The aim of this work is to investigate the level of social and medical support for breastfeeding in Ukraine.

**Methods**

A cross-sectional study was conducted by interviewing 144 mothers with breastfeeding experience by the developed survey. It included 44 questions related to general information about a woman and her child, psychological

aspects, methods and problems of breastfeeding. The respondents were divided into 3 groups by the age of the child: up to 6 months, 6-1.5 years, from 1.5 to 5 years. The statistical analysis was done using the SPSS 22.0.

## Results

According to the results of the survey 97.9% of women planned to breastfeed during pregnancy. Among them 43.7% read books and articles on the Internet about breastfeeding. 25% received information just in the maternity hospital from the medical staff. 22.9% of mothers attended parenting training courses. 9.7% received information from other sources (YouTube, other social networks). 87.5% of women have psychological support of breastfeeding from their husbands, 62.5% from parents and only 2.1% have support from a pediatrician. 59.1% of mothers feel psychological unity with the child during feeding, but 12.5% of respondents consider breastfeeding to be only food for the child. The data analyzed shown no significant differences between three groups of responders.

## Conclusion

The pilot study revealed the low level of psychological and medical support in Ukraine that should be improved. According to the data obtained, there is a lack of information about the benefits of breastfeeding for pregnant women, insufficient assistance in organizing breastfeeding and educational work in families.