

Author: Naia Ortelan

Co Author: Maria Helena D Aquino Benicio

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Title: Breastfeeding practices in Brazilian children with low birth weight

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Introduction: Breastfeeding is the most effective strategy for the prevention of morbidity and mortality, especially among infants of low birth weight. Low birth weight is the single most important factor in determining neonatal mortality. This study aimed to evaluate the breastfeeding practices in Brazilian children with low birth weight compared to the others.

Methods: Cross-sectional study based on Breastfeeding Prevalence Research in Brazilian Municipalities, held during the 2008 multivaccination campaign, which assessed the situation of breastfeeding in 64 municipalities, including the 27 state capitals and the Federal District. This is a representative sample of the Brazilian population. We studied the total of newborns of low weight and those weighing less than 2,000 grams (g). For the two groups were considered indicators of breastfeeding practice: exclusive breastfeeding (<6 months) and full breastfeeding (<1 year old). To test the difference between two proportions was performed chi-square test. The processing was performed with Stata 13.0.

Results: Were studied 62,335 children under one year. In children with birth weight <2,500g (8.2%, n=5,115) compared to the others, breastfeeding indicators (%) were: exclusive breastfeeding= 43.9% vs 48.1%, p=0.001; full breastfeeding= 70.0% vs 77.6%, p<0.001. Similarly, in children with birth weight <2,000g (2%,n=1,263): exclusive breastfeeding=40.6% vs 47.9%, p=0.089; full breastfeeding=58.2% vs. 77.3%,p<0.001.

Conclusion: It was verified more unfavorable situation among newborns of low weight, especially among smaller 2,000 grams. The results are below recommended, highlighting the importance of prioritizing promotion, protection and breastfeeding support aimed at reducing the risk of mortality in children with low birth weight.