



### **Evolution of Breastfeeding Practices in Brazil.**

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#### **Abstract**

Breastfeeding is the best isolated strategy to prevent child deaths, and promotes physical, mental and emotional health of children and woman who breastfeeds (1).

National surveys in Brazil show that since the establishment of the National Breastfeeding Program in the early 80's, breastfeeding rates in the country are increasing gradually (2,3,4).

In 2008, the Ministry of Health supported the II Breastfeeding Prevalence Research in the 26 Brazilian Capitals and Federal District (5) in order to verify the current status of breastfeeding in Brazil and analyze the evolution of breastfeeding indicators from 1999 to 2008.

The study enrolled, by random cluster sampling, 34,366 children under a year of age who attended the second phase of the vaccination campaign in 2008 in all Brazilian capitals and the Federal District. Information on feeding practices was collected through 24-hour recall. The analysis was based on the indicators proposed by OMS (6). Data were analyzed using SPSS 16.0 by analysis of complex samples. The median duration of exclusive breastfeeding and breastfeeding were obtained by logit analysis.

It was found that 67.7% of children were breastfed in the first hour of life. The prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding in children under six months was 41.0%. The median duration of exclusive breastfeeding was 54.1 days (1.8 months) and the median duration of breastfeeding was 341.6 days (11.2 months). The use of bottles (58.4%) and pacifiers (42.6%) were frequent.

There was an increase of 30.7 days in the median duration of exclusive breastfeeding and 45.7 days in the median duration of breastfeeding from 1999 to 2008. There was notable reduction in the use of a pacifier in the period, from 57.7% to 42.6%.

We concluded that there was a significant improvement in the situation of breastfeeding in Brazil.

However, we are far from achieving the targets proposed by the WHO of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and continuation of breastfeeding until the second year or more. We hope these findings help policy makers and health professionals to implement breastfeeding actions in Brazil.



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