

Cluster breastfeeding syndrome in infants

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Objective. Cluster breastfeeding syndrome (“cluster feedings”, “bunch feedings”) is when baby has several feedings close together during a certain period, in some cases during the day. The purpose of this study is to examine the frequency and to identify the reasons for the cluster breastfeeding syndrome in lactating women.

Methods. Questioning was conducted with 223 lactating women aged 19–44 years.

Questioning including questions regarding the use of the delivery methods and the lactation period. Psychological testing of lactating women was also conducted. The anxiety level was evaluated by Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) (score of 14 points is borderline). Lactating women were divided into two groups: without Cluster Breastfeeding syndrome (group I) and with Cluster Breastfeeding syndrome (control group). Statistical analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel 2007, SPSS Statistics v 24.0.0.0. Spearman's correlation coefficient (r) and Pearson's correlation coefficient (rx) were calculated. Data was compared using chi-square test and $p \leq 0.05$ was regarded as statistically significant.

Results. Among the women surveyed, women with one child prevailed (63%). The average duration of the lactation

period was 11.1 ± 5 months. The average time the baby was at the breast was 19 ± 4.1 minutes. Syndrome of prolonged, continuous feeding was noted in 5% of cases when the baby was at the chest continuously for a day, with short breaks at night sleep. In this group, in women (90%), labor was performed by Caesarean section. In the group I (cluster breastfeeding syndrome group), the average age of women was 35.8 ± 5.5 years, in the control group 25.0 ± 4.6 ($p < 0.001$). In group I, the average score on the Hamilton scale was 28.4 ± 6.5 (level of symptomatic anxiety), in the control group — 12.9 ± 9.7 ($p = 0.0003$). All baby in the group I have been gaining enough weight and producing sufficient dirty and wet diapers. Correlation analysis revealed a direct strong correlation between the presence of cluster breastfeeding syndrome in a child born by Caesarean section ($rx = 0.97$) from mothers who gave birth over the age of 35 and have a level of symptomatic anxiety ($r = 1$).

Conclusion. Cluster breastfeeding syndrome (cluster feedings, bunch feedings) occurs in 5% of cases and is associated with the late birth of the first child, high anxiety of the mother and the birth of a child by Caesarean section.