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Prevalence and conditioning factors for breastfeeding on São Miguel Island

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According to the 2005/2006 National Health Inquiries, Azores is the Portuguese district with the lowest breastfeeding rates (BR): 25% and 10% at 3 and 6 months, respectively.

Objective: To determine the prevalence and conditioning factors for breastfeeding in São Miguel Island. An observational, analytic and retrospective study was conducted, applying a questionnaire to a specific population of São Miguel's Health Care Unit between 15/09/2014 and 15/03/2015. The studied population was obtained from a convenience sample. We interviewed mothers of infants between 6 and 12 months of age. BR at birth was 74.2%, decreasing to 17.7% at 6 months. The largest decrease in the BR was of 21%, at the end of the first month ($p < 0.001$). The three major reasons for breastfeeding cessation were: not enough breastmilk (71.7%); mom disliking breastfeeding (26.1%); and baby crying due to hunger (17.4%). We found an association between the 6th month BR and marital status ($p = 0.026$), family income ($p = 0.025$), the mother's professional status ($p = 0.020$), previous breastfeeding experience of at least 3 months and 4 months ($p = 0.019$, $p = 0.009$) and exclusive breastfeeding during the first month. We can conclude that women who have an outside job, those with a higher monthly income and those who are able to keep exclusive breastfeeding for the first month are the ones who breastfeed longer. The success of BR at 1 month is a predicting factor for BR at 6 months. Therefore, our goal is to assist mothers, especially during the first month of motherhood, in order to increase BR.