

# Feeding difficulties during breast feeding and weaning in infancy and toddlerhood

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## THE STUDY

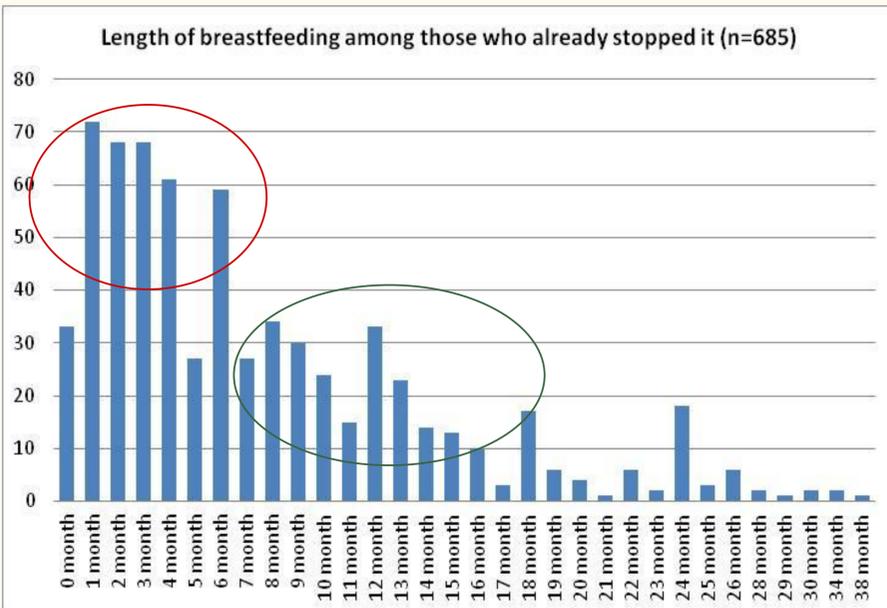
▪ **'FOR HEALTHY OFFSPRING' Project:** first Hungarian research (n=1164) examining the prevalence of early childhood behaviour regulation problems (excessive crying, infant feeding and sleep difficulties) and the significance of different risk and protective factors behind them.

▪ **Parents of 0-36-month-old children** questioned in Budapest Heim Pal Hospital and in local areas; socio-economically diverse sample

▪ In questionnaires, mothers of 0-3-year-old children (n=1133) were asked about breastfeeding, weaning and later eating habits.

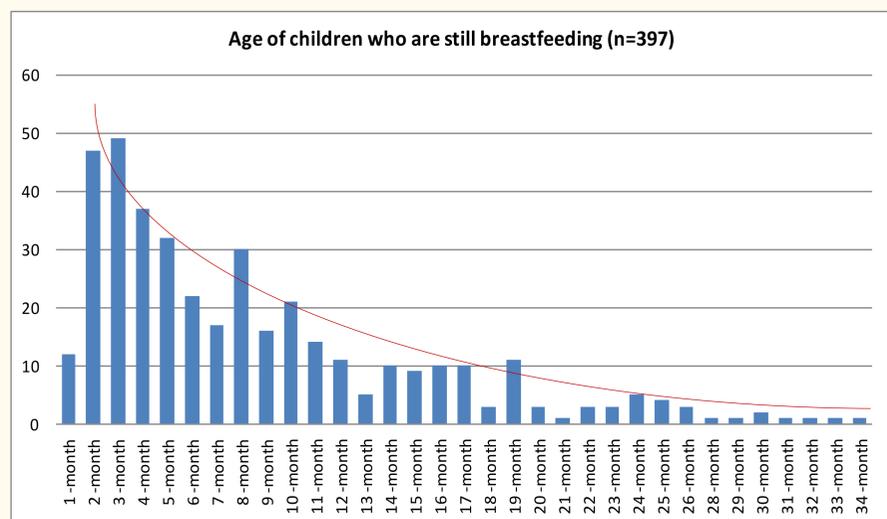
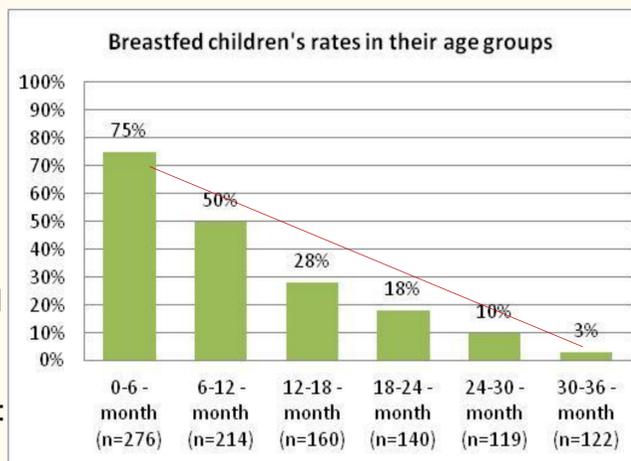
## DESCRIPTIVES

- **97% of the mothers had breastfed** in our sample.
- Mothers had already stopped, generally breastfed until **7.58±6.75 (min: 0, max: 38) months (peak: 0-6 months)**.
- **56.6% of mothers stopped breastfeeding in the first half year**, and 92.1% during the first 18 months. **Weaning generally began at 5.54±2.09 months**.



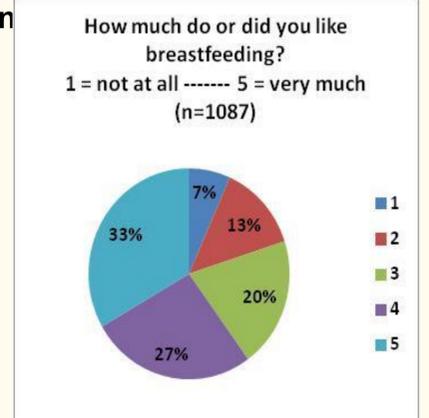
- Mothers with **higher education breastfed 2.5 months longer** than lower educated mothers ( $Z=-5.15$ ;  $p<0.000$ ).
- **Number of breastfed children is less with age**.

For those who still breastfeeding, **children's age widely vary (max: 34 months)**.



## RESULTS

- **Mothers generally liked breastfeeding** (M: 4.22±1.08 in a 1-5 Likert scale)
- **BUT: 20% of them had significant repugnance towards it!**



- **54.8% of the mothers had some breastfeeding problems. In this subsample, several kinds of problems were mentioned:**

Difficulties questioned directly		
n=592	Not enough milk, dried up quickly, hard starting of breastfeeding (different reasons)	57.6%
	Mother's illness, medications, acute or prolonged stress	12.0%
	Child was impatient	12.0%
	Child choked, gagged	4.4%
Other difficulties mentioned spontaneously by the mothers		
n=565	Continuously sucked (too long, too frequent, too slow, only breastfeeding soothed him).	9%
	Only bottle was accepted by the child	9%
	Palatoschisis; ankyloglossia	9%
	Inflammation of the breast	7%
	Nipples turned inside	7%
	Prematurity	7%
	Baby suffering from colic (swallowed a lot of air, greedy)	7%
	"The milk was not nutritious or fatty enough"	7%
	Child bite	7%
	He could not, he didn't want to suck, he didn't suck	6%
	Sore / cracked nipples	5%
	Restless environment (e.g. siblings)	5%
	Dysapnoea	4%
	Baby was very restless, tearful (crying) (even during eating)	4%
	Baby's sensitivity to milk (dairy-free diet needed, catarrhal stool)	4%
	Milking was necessary	4%
	Extra nutrition was needed (not thrived sufficiently)	4%
	Only one breast was accepted by the child	4%
	Sleepy baby, fell asleep during breast-feeding (e.g. due to jaundice)	3%
	Vomiting, reflux	2%
	"Lazy baby", "non-combat", "clumsy", "tired"	2%
	Born with tooth, she could not suck	2%
	Early menses	2%
	Too much milk	2%
	Breastfeeding was painful (breast, uterus, seams, etc.)	1%
	Nipples were snapped hardly (poor technique, improper entry, large nipples)	1%
	Baby was powerless (e.g. due to illness, developmental problems, poor sucking reflex, etc.)	1%
	Uncertainty, difficulty in shakedown	1%
	Breastfeeding only with nipple-protector	1%
	Breastfeeding twins	1%
Numbers of mentioned difficulties		
n=590	one difficulty	72.5%
	two difficulties	22.7%
	three difficulties	4.4%
	four difficulties	0.3%

- **During the first 3 years: in 16% of the families children had some feeding and growth difficulties; 10% of mothers thought that feeding was a serious problem. More problems when only solid food was given!**

	only breastfeeding	breastfeeding and solid food	only solid food
Feeding and growth difficulties	10.3%	13.8%	18.0%
Feeding is a serious problem? (4-5 values in a 5-point Likert scale)	6.8%	8.6%	11.2%

## CONCLUSION

Because the frequency of feeding problems have varied across the breastfeeding-weaning process and most serious problems were shown after complete weaning, while the least in only-breastfeeding, promoting comfortable breastfeeding and unstressful transitions to general solid food eating is an important issue for paediatricians and practitioners in the field of infant mental health.

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