Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence and Predictors of 6-Month Exclusive Breastfeeding among Canadian Women: A National Survey

Version: 2 Date: 15 February 2010

Reviewer: Giovanni Radaelli

Reviewer's report:

General comment

The Authors answered satisfactorily most of questions but the manuscript still needs improvements and some points have to be considered.

Matter is of interest for the reader of BMC Pediatrics. Although the information reported in the manuscript remains limited it may be considered for publication in BMC Pediatrics.

What a pity! the Authors were not able to analyze the duration of (exclusive) breastfeeding.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Page 6, line 13 and page 9 (Results), first four lines. The sentence: “The present study considered all MES mothers who had babies aged >= 6 months at the time of interview” (page 6, line 13) and the two first sentences Results: “for the present study, … to represent 66,810 Canadian women.” could be merged to better read: “The present study considered the 5615 MES mothers (87.4%) who had babies aged >= 6 month at the time of interview. Mothers were weighted to represent 66,810 Canadian women.” Indeed, the first two sentence in the Results section better fit in the Methods.

2. Page 6, lines from -5 to -2. The sentence “Infants who received liquids … were categorized as exclusively breastfeeding.” is confusing and unnecessary. It may be omitted.

3. Page 9, lines from 5-7. “During pregnancy, 9.9% … breastfeeding was 90.3%.”. In the present form these two sentences only duplicate data reported in Table 1. Therefore they should be reworded or otherwise omitted.

4. Page 9, lines 7-11. “Exclusive breastfeeding rates … at 6 months of infant’s age.” To do not merely duplicate information presents in Figure 1, 95%CI of rates should be included here.”

5. Page 9, line 11, and lines 12-15. “… were relatively close to the national average (Figure 2).” This sentence is redundant and misleading. Indeed, (see Figure 2) in Northern territories the rate (21.2%) is approximately 1.5 higher that the national average, while in Newfound land and … the rate (6.5%) is less that half of the national average. I would suggest the Authors to reword the sentence,
for example as “Figure 2 compares the breastfeeding rates in Canadian provinces and territories to the national average”. Furthermore bars reporting 95%CI of exclusive breastfeeding rates across the provinces and territories would be welcome in Figure 2. Alternatively, the Authors could report the significance of difference between each territory and the national average. Please note that at present nor P-values or 95%CIs are reported in the text and Figure 2.


7. Page 15, line 1. The two additional main limitations of the present study have to be declared here, that are: the survey was not a longitudinal study, duration of (exclusive) breastfeeding was not analyzed.

8. Table 2. Page 29. “Number of past pregnancy” should be treated as a categorical variable (possibly dichotomized). Also “Number of stressful events” and “Number of prenatal visits” might be better treated as categorical variables.

9. Table 3. At page 9, line –5. The Authors declare that “12 variables were retained in the final model (Table 3)”. When reading Table 3, I found only 8 variables (the significant only?). To benefit the reader, the Authors should specify possibly in a footnote all the 12 variables included.

Discretionary Revisions

10. Page 6, line 8. Please add percentage “(75.2%)” of responders after 6,421.

11. Page 6, line 10. “Majority” is not a scientific term. The Authors should specify the percentage. Also they should specify the period after delivery during which the remaining women were interviewed.

12. Page 6, line -4. “… after 26 weeks of age (equivalent to 6 months)”. It might be better write “…at age of 6 months”.

13. Page 7, lines from -4 to -2. Specify whether the 13 questions were validated.

14. page 8, line 11. “on the other hand” can be omitted.

15. Page 8, line -6. “all the 95% CI…” would be better read as “the 95% CI…”

16. Last line. Specify the tests are two-tailed.

17. Page 11, line –6. “internationally” is redundant and could be omitted.

18. Page 12, line 6. “…studies can either…” would be better read “…studies might either”, as the sentences is hypothetical only.

19. Page 12, line 9. Maybe that “level” would be better read “analysis”.

20. Page 12, line 9 and line -4. “…exclusive breastfeeding.” Would be better read “…6-month exclusive breastfeeding.”

22. Page 13, line 3. “High parity was also found to increase exclusive breastfeeding.” would be better read “High parity was also found to be positively associated with 6-month exclusive breastfeeding.”

23. Page 13, line 7. “…exclusive breastfeeding.” would be better read “…6-month exclusive breastfeeding.”

24. Page 14, line 15. “Evidently” is redundant and can be omitted.

25. Page 15, line 2. “…assesses…” I suppose that the study is now ended. Therefore “…assessed…” may be more appropriate.

26. Page 15, line 4. “thus” is redundant and may be omitted.

27. Page 15, line 6. “…minimized …” is not true scientifically. For example, “…may be reduced…” can be appropriate.

28. Table 1. To preserve linguistic consistency through the manuscript, “26 weeks” may be changed into “6 months”.


31. Table 2. “years of education (years)” would better read “Mother’s education level (years)” maternal “Birth weight” would be better read “Infant’s birth weight”.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.