The association between infant feeding pattern and mother's quality of life in Taiwan

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Abstract

Background This study compared the health-related quality of life (HRQOL) of mothers using different infant feeding methods.

Methods We used the Medical Outcomes Study 36-item Short-Form (SF-36) to measure the HRQOL of 1,747 mothers and used the scores to look for associations with infant feeding methods (not breastfeeding, breastfeeding for <1 month, breastfeeding 1–5 months, and still breastfeeding at the 6th month). The mothers were chosen via a stratified sampling from the Taiwan national birth registration data between November and December 2003.

Results HRQOL and breastfeeding duration were positively associated. Of the eight unadjusted domain scores of the SF-36, general health perception and mental health were significantly different among these four different infant feeding groups ($P < 0.05$). After controlling for potential confounding factors, mothers who breastfed for 6 months or longer had a higher HRQOL score than the other mothers. In addition, their physical functioning, general health perception and mental health scores were higher than those of mothers who did not breastfeed ($P < 0.05$). Mother's family income and parity and child's health status were also associated with mother's quality of life.

Conclusions Compared to the other mothers, mothers who breastfed for six moths or longer had better HRQOL. However, the limitation that this study was cross-sectional in design should be considered and further studies are needed.