

BREAST-FEEDING AND BOTTLE-FEEDING OF TWINS, TRIPLETS AND HIGHER ORDER MULTIPLE BIRTHS

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Objective This study was performed to determine the rates of breast-feeding and/or bottle-feeding in mothers of twins, triplets and higher order multiple births compared to those in mothers of singletons, and identify factors associated with decision as to breast-feed or bottle-feed.

Methods The subjects were 1,529 mothers of twins aged 6 months-6 years and 258 mothers of triplets and higher order multiple births (higher multiples) aged 6 months-6 years (234 mothers of triplets, 20 mothers of quadruplets, 4 mothers of quintuplets). Also, 1,300 subjects were recruited as a control group from mothers of singletons aged 6 months-6 years. Information regarding feeding methods, including exclusive breast-feeding, mixed-feeding and bottle-feeding with formula milk only, and duration of breast-feeding (in months) was collected.

Results There were significantly higher rates of bottle-feeding in mothers of twins and higher multiples than in mothers of singletons. Duration of breast-feeding in mothers who chose exclusive breast-feeding or mixed-feeding for twins and higher multiples was significantly shorter than those for the singletons. The feeding methods for the twins or higher multiples were not associated with prematurity or low birth weight. However, after adjusting for each associated factor using logistic regression analysis, the decision to bottle-feed was significantly associated with non-cooperation of the husband in childrearing and degree of anxiety that mothers felt when informed of a multiple pregnancy. The odds ratio indicated that mothers who received no cooperation from the husband for childrearing were 1.83 times more likely to choose bottle-feeding as those who received cooperation. Further, the odds ratio indicated that mothers who felt greater anxiety when informed of a multiple pregnancy were 1.73 times more likely to choose bottle-feeding as those who did not feel much anxiety.

Conclusion This study found that establishment and continuation of breast-feeding for twins, triplets and higher order multiple births are much more difficult than for singletons. Further, cooperation of the husband in childrearing and the degree of maternal anxiety when informed of a multiple pregnancy are significant factors affecting the decision to breast-feed or bottle-feed for twins, triplets or higher order multiple births.

Key words : twin, triplets, mothers, breast-feeding, bottle-feeding

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