

**Abstract**

**Original Article**

**Analysis of Maternal Characteristics during Breastfeeding in Early Infancy Associated with Prolactin Levels and Breastfeeding LATCH Scores**

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**Abstract**

**Objective:** This study was carried out in order to analyze maternal characteristics during the breastfeeding in early infancy by use of prolactin comparison and LATCH charting system.

**Methods:** This is a cross-sectional study involving 63 mothers and their healthy full-term newborns, carried out during 01.04.2010 and 01.05.2010 at the clinic of obstetrics and gynecology in Balcali Medical Faculty Hospital in Adana, Turkey.

The study data were gathered by using questionnaire forms handed out at interviews, and by careful observation throughout the study, which consisted of the pregnancy history of mothers, their knowledge and experiences regarding breast milk, the breastfeeding LATCH score, the prolactin levels in the serums, starting time of breastfeeding, and the Apgar score of newborns for their health assessment. The weight and height of mothers were measured for determining their body-mass index (BMI).

**Results:** Mothers who started breastfeeding within the first 'thirty minutes' after delivery were found to be 73.0%. Among those who had 'vaginal delivery' this rate is 95.4% in comparison to 61.0% for others who had undergone 'caesarean' procedure. Furthermore the rate of the mothers who had 'general anesthesia' and started breastfeeding within the first thirty minutes is 50.0%, compared to 71.4% of those who had 'regional anesthesia'. The relationship between delivery methods and prolactin levels was found to be significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). While the prolactin level of mothers having breastfed their infants in the first 'five minutes' is  $380.16 \pm 84.77$  ng/ml, this is  $277.77 \pm 115.84$  ng/ml for those having done that later than 'thirty minutes' after delivery. The average LATCH score among mothers who had caesarean delivery was  $5.56 \pm 3.30$  while that of those with vaginal delivery was  $7.18 \pm 3.40$ .

**Conclusion:** With respect to supporting breastfeeding in early infancy, vaginal deliveries should be encouraged and regional anesthesia should be recommended instead of caesarean delivery.

**Key words:** Breast milk, breastfeeding in early infancy, LATCH, prolactin, nursing.