

KiGGS – The German Health Interview and Examination Survey for Children and Adolescents

Abstract Principal Publication

Bundesgesundheitsbl – Gesundheitsforsch – Gesundheitsschutz 2007 · 50: 624-633

C. Lange · L. Schenk · R. Bergmann

Distribution, duration and temporal trend of breastfeeding in Germany. Results of the German Health Interview and Examination Survey for Children and Adolescents (KiGGS)

Abstract Breast milk is the most natural and best type of nutrition for almost all infants. Moreover, breastfeeding is associated with health benefits for mother and child: breast milk supports the development of the infant and protects it against diseases; the health benefits for the mothers also extend beyond the period after birth. Therefore, the WHO recommends exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months. Until now, no representative data on the breastfeeding rate have been available in Germany. The KiGGS results show an increase in the breastfeeding rate from 1986 to 2005. Across all age groups studied, 76.7 % (95 % CI: 75.2 %–78.1 %) of the children were ever breastfed. The rate of ever-breastfed children was significantly lower in mothers from socially disadvantaged population groups, children of mothers who had smoked during pregnancy or in situations with problems after birth. Children with migration background were more frequently ever-breastfed than children without migration background. The average duration of breastfeeding was – across all age-groups – 6.9 months (95 % CI: 6.8–7.0); the duration of full breastfeeding was 4.6 months (95 % CI: 4.5–4.7) on average. 22.4 % (95 % CI: 21.4 %–23.5 %) of all children from the KiGGS study population were exclusively breastfed for a period of six months. The results emphasises the necessity to further promote breastfeeding, especially to support the socially disadvantaged, and most of all to encourage a positive attitude towards breastfeeding in the society.

Keywords Health survey - Children - Adolescents - Duration of breastfeeding - Breastfeeding rate - Full breastfeeding - Social disadvantage - Promotion of breastfeeding
