

# Nursing care of infants in the community

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**Background:** this subject is very topical to every newly started family who is planning to have children or have already got a child and also to community nurses who often communicate with families bringing up small children.

**Aim of the study:** to find out the nursing care problems of infants up to the age of six months and their parents' attitudes towards the work of nurses.

**Materials and methods:** The study was carried out in December 2005 – April 2006. One hundred and fifty two mothers bringing up 6 month-old or older infants participated in it.

The questionnaire was composed of 42 questions. The interviews took place on the Internet forums: [www.tavovaikas.lt](http://www.tavovaikas.lt) and [www.supermama.lt](http://www.supermama.lt). The collected data were analysed using the statistical program SPSS for Windows 13.0.

**Results:** Infant nursing care problems most often occurring in the 1<sup>st</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months were the following: in the 1<sup>st</sup> month of infant's life the respondents complained about breastfeeding (24.8%) and umbilical care (19.9%) more often than about skin care problems 12.8% ( $p < 0.05$ ), while in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> months infants were more often discomforted by abdominal problems. In the 4<sup>th</sup> month of their life infants were more often discomforted by the abdominal problems (20.8%) followed by those associated with teething 14.4% ( $p < 0.05$ ). In the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> months of infants' life the complementary feeding needs emerged ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusions:** Mothers very rarely apply to a nurse when they experience infant nursing care problems. The respondents solved these problems in the 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> months more often with help of extended family, while in the 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months the respondents more often tried to solve them by reading a special literature or consulting a doctor.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> month of infants' life, nurses visited them most often once a month, the same as in the 2<sup>nd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months. Nearly half of the respondents did not rely on the nursing staff.

**Key words:** infant, nursing care needs, community nurse, nursing problems

## BACKGROUND

It is very important to assist newborns in adaptation, to assure their successful growth, development and health status. All of the mentioned problems can be solved only by appropriate and thorough nursing and rational feeding.

In the primary health-care system, infant's health and its maintenance are most closely associated with his / her extended family and the surrounding environment. Community nurses, when visiting a child, have an excellent possibility to observe his / her development, growth and surroundings. Therefore they can help the family when they face certain problems associated with the infant nursing care.

No doubt, this theme is very topical to every newly started family planning to have children or already having a child, and also to the community nurses who often communicate with the families bringing up small children.

The infant's health depends on timely nursing care he / she is given and the environment where he / she grows: the optimal

temperature of the room, food quality, sleep, getting a fresh air, clothing, hygiene, etc. (1).

When solving the problems regarding the child's health, nurses usually face two patients: the child and the family. The results mostly depend on the nurse's capability to communicate with the family when teaching them how to take care of the child.

Most of parents do understand that regular and timely nursing visits help to decrease their child's susceptibility to diseases on the one hand, and save their costs necessary for the treatment of their child on the other hand.

According to the order No. 301 "On Health Assessment of Children and Teenagers" issued by the Health Minister of the Republic of Lithuania on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2000, in the 1<sup>st</sup> month of their life all healthy newborns shall should be visited by nurses once a week, and those who might be exposed to any risk factors may should be visited more often (2).

During the first visit, a community nurse and a doctor evaluate the environment of the newborn, the family's preparation to take care of her / him, the newborn's and mother's health status, give advice on nursing care and feeding, and in case of certain problems provide an appropriate help. Mother and family members should receive exact and unambiguous

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answers to their questions, and medical staff should be certain that the mother and family members understood the answers in the right way.

Legislation of the Republic of Lithuania on health care of pregnant, parturient and post-partum women and newborns do not list very precise functions of community nurses regarding teaching pregnant and postpartum mothers how to take nursing care and to breast-feed their infants (1, 3, 4).

There are a lot of studies made by foreign and Lithuanian authors on newborn / infant nursing care and the importance of natural feeding to infant's health. There are several clinical studies which analyse the nurse's role in newborn / infant nursing care and teaching mothers breastfeeding technique (5–11).

The authors have failed in finding any studies on the nurse's role in taking care of the infant up to the age of six months as well as on how parents evaluate the work performed by nurses.

*The aim of the study* was to find out the infant nursing care problems up to the age of six months and their parents' attitude towards the work of nurses.

*The tasks of the study were as follows:*

1. To define infant nursing care problems which emerge most often in the 1st–6th months of their life.
2. To find out where mothers usually seek help when any infant nursing care problems arise.
3. To find out how often the nursing staff was making home visits in the 1st–6th months of infant's age.
4. To find out how parents assess the work of the nurses who visit their infants at home.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Study population** – mothers bringing up infants of 6 months of age and over.

### Methods

#### 1. Sample size

Mothers bringing up 6 month-old or older infants took part in the study. In total, 186 questionnaires were distributed; 152 of them were returned and were considered as suitable for the data analysis (the response rate was 81.7%).

The inclusion criteria were the following:

- respondents bringing up 6 month-old or older infants;
- respondents living in Lithuania (a few questionnaires filled in by respondents living abroad were rejected);
- a properly filled-in questionnaire.

#### 2. Methods

*Online Questionnaire.* An original questionnaire containing 42 questions and representing the peculiarities of nursing care of infants up to the age of six months was compiled and used for the study. All the questions were grouped into three groups. The 1<sup>st</sup> group included questions on the characteristics of the respondents (1–6) – their social status, age, education, parity, etc. The 2<sup>nd</sup> group were the questions on newborn / infant nursing care problems (7–36). These questions aimed at finding out how often community nurses visited infants at home during their first 6 months of life, what nursing care problems emerged most often and who helped mothers to solve the problems. The

3<sup>rd</sup> group of questions aimed at finding out parents' attitudes towards the work of nurses (37–42).

### 3. Study course

The study was carried out in December 2005 – April 2006.

3.1. The newest literature was gathered according to the subject, and an analysis of this literature was made. After that, a questionnaire of 42 questions designed for mothers bringing up 6 month-old or older infants was worked out by the authors.

3.2. A pilot study was carried out prior to starting the interview – canvassing 10 respondents who had 6 month-old or older infants (to check the relevance of the questionnaire).

3.3. The interviews took place on the Internet forums: [www.tavovaiukas.lt](http://www.tavovaiukas.lt) and [www.supermama.lt](http://www.supermama.lt). These forums agreed to put in their sites the questionnaire which was designed to question mothers bringing up 6 month-old and older infants.

3.4. The aim of the study, its relevance and need were explained to the study participants. Anonymity of the responders was guaranteed, and the received data were used only for this study.

3.5. Afterwards the obtained data were analysed.

### Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis of the data was carried out using SPSS 13.0 software package for Windows)

Frequency and correlation analyses were completed. Data of continuous variables were calculated by average mean and standard deviation. The results were regarded statistically significant if the p-value was less than or equal to 0.05 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). The correlation was determined by calculating the rank correlation (Spearman) coefficient ( $r$ ).

### Reliability of the questionnaire

The reliability of the questionnaire was measured using correlation analysis. Cronbach's alpha of all the generalized factors exceeded 0.6, i. e. the reliability of the internal consistency of the questionnaire was good.

## RESULTS

The mean age of the respondents was  $26.4 \pm 3.9$  years. The youngest mother was 19 and the eldest 37 years old. The age mode (Mo – most often occurring number) was 25 years. After rank order analysis, the age of the respondents was distributed into four groups according to quartiles. The majority of respondents were 24–28 years old (55.9%). The majority of the respondents were Vilnius inhabitants (40.1%) and those bringing up one child (66.4%); two thirds of the respondents had higher education (71.1%), the findings being of statistical significance (Table 1).

The youngest infant was 6 months and the eldest 19 months old, mean age  $8.24 \pm 3.1$  months, age mode 6 months.

Special interest of the study was to elucidate the infant nursing care needs that occur in the first 6 months of their life (Tables 2, 3). The questions were open but the respondents were not allowed to give more than three answers. Regarding the 1st month of the infant's life the respondents more complained of breastfeeding problems (24.8%) and umbilical care problems (19.9%) than skin care – 12.8% or disturbed sleep – 5.7% ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Parameters	Number of respondents	Significance of difference (p)
Age in years	19–23	27 (17.8%)
	24–28	<b>85 (55.9%)*</b>
	29–33	31 (20.4%)*
	34–37	9 (5.9%)
Education	Secondary	23 (15.1%)**
	Further	21 (13.8%)
	Higher	<b>108 (71.1%)**</b>
Number of children	First	101 (66.4%)
	Two and more	51 (33.6%)
Town	Vilnius	<b>61 (40.1%***)</b>
	Kaunas	38 (25.0%***)
	Klaipėda	16 (10.5%)
	Šiauliai, Panevėžys	9 (5.9%)
	Lentvaris, Kretinga, Jurbarkas	13 (8.5%)
	Other towns*	15 (10.0%)

\* Alytus, Visaginas, Mažeikiai, Plungė, Palanga, Biržai, Joniškis, Šilalė, Marijampolė.

Table 2. The rate of newborn / infant nursing problems in the 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> months

Problems	1 <sup>st</sup> month (n = 101)	2 <sup>nd</sup> month (n = 130)	3 <sup>rd</sup> month (n = 133)
Associated with breastfeeding <sup>1</sup>	<b>35 (24.8%)*</b>	23 (16.7%)*	17 (13.3%)
Abdominal problems <sup>2</sup>	22 (15.6%)	<b>83 (60.2%)*</b>	<b>69 (54.2%)*</b>
Skin care problems <sup>3</sup>	18 (12.8%)*	15 (10.9%)	10 (7.8%)
Disturbed sleep	8 (5.7%)	20 (14.5%)	21 (16.4%)*
Umbilical care	28 (19.9%)	–	–
Significance of difference (p)	*p < 0.05	*p < 0.05	*p < 0.05
No problems	<b>53 (37.6%)</b>	22 (15.9%)	29 (22.7%)

<sup>1</sup> Pore breastfeeding technique, the drop of breast-milk quantity, breast problems.

<sup>2</sup> Flatulence, stomach-ache, colics, defecation disorders.

<sup>3</sup> Diaper rash, dryness, rash, marble skin, dermatitis.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> months of their life the infants were more often discomforted by abdominal problems than by breastfeeding or disturbed sleep problems ( $p < 0.05$ ), (Table 2).

In the 4<sup>th</sup> month of the infants' life they were more often discomforted by abdominal problems (20.8%) than by teething (14.4%) or problems associated with breastfeeding (9.6%) ( $p < 0.05$ ).

In the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> months of infant's life, problems associated with complementary feeding occurred ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 3).

A more detailed investigation was made of what helped mothers to solve all infant nursing care problems occurring in the 1<sup>st</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months of their infant's life (Tables 4, 5).

In the 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> months of infant's life, mothers preferred to solve nursing care problems more often with help of the extend-

Table 3. The rate of infant nursing problems in the 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months

Problems	4 <sup>th</sup> month (n = 127)	5 <sup>th</sup> month (n = 137)	6 <sup>th</sup> month (n = 112)
Associated with breastfeeding <sup>1</sup>	12 (9.6%)*	5 (3.3%)	17 (13.3%)
Abdominal problems <sup>2</sup>	<b>26 (20.8%)*</b>	9 (8.3%)	5 (5.0%)
Skin care problems <sup>3</sup>	–	17 (15.6%)*	10 (7.8%)
Disturbed sleep, irritability caused by teething	18 (14.4%)	22 (20.4%)	28 (16.7%)*
Motor development disorder	20 (16.0%)	18 (16.5%)	21 (20.8%)
Associated complementary feeding	10 (8.0%)	39 (35.8%)*	42 (41.6%)*
Significance of difference (p)	*p < 0.05	*p < 0.05	*p < 0.05
No problem	25 (20.0%)	15 (13.9%)	13 (22.7%)

<sup>1</sup> Pore breastfeeding technique, the drop of breast-milk quantity, breast problems.

<sup>2</sup> Flatulence, stomach-ache, colics, defecation disorders.

<sup>3</sup> Diaper rash, dryness, rash, marble skin, dermatitis.

Table 4. Solving of infant nursing problems in the 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> months

Problems were solved with the help of	1 <sup>st</sup> month (n = 101)	2 <sup>nd</sup> month (n = 130)	3 <sup>rd</sup> month (n = 133)
Extended family	<b>72 (52.5%)*</b>	<b>90 (60.4%)*</b>	<b>95 (64.6%)*</b>
Doctor	55 (30.0%)	66 (44.3%)	63 (42.9%)
Nurse	32 (22.7%)*	41 (27.5%)*	36 (24.6%)*
Friend	32 (22.7%)	35 (23.5%)	33 (22.4%)
Special literature	61 (43.3%)	17 (11.4%)	82 (55.8%)
Significance of difference (p)	*p < 0.05	*p < 0.05	*p < 0.05

Table 5. Solving of infant nursing problems in the 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months

Problems were solved with the help of	4 <sup>th</sup> month (n = 127)	5 <sup>th</sup> month (n = 137)	6 <sup>th</sup> month (n = 112)
Extended family	63 (44.3%)	69 (49.6%)	65 (45.8%)
Doctor	65 (46.4%)	<b>71 (51.1%)*</b>	<b>80 (56.3%)*</b>
Nurse	28 (20.0%)*	20 (14.4%)*	23 (16.2%)*
Friend	33 (23.6%)	25 (18.0%)	77 (54.2%)
Special literature	<b>84 (60.0%)*</b>	<b>74 (53.2%)*</b>	<b>82 (55.8%)*</b>
Significance of difference (p)	*p < 0.05	*p < 0.05	*p < 0.05

ed family rather than to ask the nursing staff or doctor for help ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 4).

The infant nursing care problems that occurred in the 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months of the infant's life the respondents solved more often by reading a special literature or applying to the doctor instead of asking the nurse to help them ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 5).

Table 6. Frequency of home nursing visits in the 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> months

Visiting	1 <sup>st</sup> month	2 <sup>nd</sup> month	3 <sup>rd</sup> month
Every day	5 (3.3%)	1 (0.7%)	–
Several times per week	10 (6.6%)	12 (7.9%)	4 (2.6%)
Once a week	22 (14.5%)*	12 (7.9%)	4 (2.6%)
Once in 2 weeks	27 (17.8%)	16 (10.5%)	16 (10.5%)
Once a month	<b>59 (38.8%)*</b>	32 (21.1%)*	28 (18.4%)*
No visits	29 (19.1%)	<b>79 (52.0%)*</b>	<b>100 (65.8%)*</b>
<b>Significance of difference (p)</b>	*p < 0.05	*p < 0.05	*p < 0.05

The results showed no association among the infant's nursing care problems and the mother's age, education, number of births and place of residence.

To the question "When did the nurse visit you after you came back home from the hospital after the delivery" slightly more than a half (51.9%) of mothers answered that the nurses visited them within the first 3 days. Most (42.8%) of the respondents were visited by the nursing staff on the third day.

Nearly half (46.1%) of the mothers were visited by a nurse after the third day and 1.9% were not visited at all.

We also tried to find out how often nurses visited newborns at home in the 1<sup>st</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months of their life (Tables 6, 7).

In the 1<sup>st</sup> month of infant's life nurses made more visits once a month (38.8%), and once a week – 14.5% ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Tables 6 and 7 show that nursing staff visited the infants in the 2<sup>nd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months of their life once a month ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Mothers were not visited mostly in the 5<sup>th</sup> (79.6%) and 6<sup>th</sup> (78.9%) months of their infant's life.

The authors attempted to find out how often the respondents would like to be visited by a nurse in the 1<sup>st</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months of their infants' life.

Most mothers would like to be visited more often in the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> month (61.0%), i. e. once a week, but most of them were visited once a month (38.8%).

Nearly half (44.2%) of the mothers had a wish to be visited by nurses once a month in the 3<sup>rd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months of their infants' life, but most of the respondents were not visited at all (Tables 6, 7) ( $p < 0.05$ ).

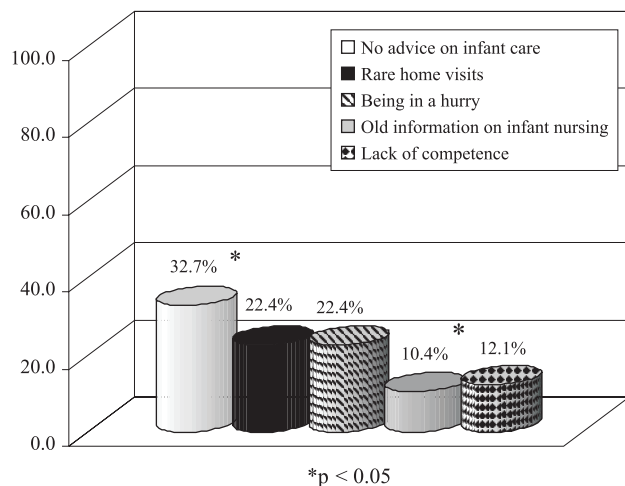


Figure. Reasons why mothers do not rely on nurses

Table 7. Frequency of home nursing visits in the 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> months

Visiting	4 <sup>th</sup> month	5 <sup>th</sup> month	6 <sup>th</sup> month
Several times per week	4 (2.6%)	3 (2.0%)	–
Once a week	2 (1.3%)	1 (0.7%)	5 (3.3%)
Once in 2 weeks	3 (2.0%)	4 (2.6%)	4 (2.6%)
Once a month	36 (23.7%)*	23 (15.1%)*	23 (15.1%)*
No visits	<b>107 (70.4%)*</b>	<b>121 (79.6%)*</b>	<b>120 (78.9%)*</b>
<b>Significance of difference (p)</b>	*p < 0.05	*p < 0.05	*p < 0.05

Evaluation of mothers' indications on items they were lacking in nurses' work showed that mothers were lacking information on infant care and solving infant nursing care problems (76.8%) more often than attention (42.7%), newer knowledge (29.3%) or competent actions (21.9%) ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The answers to the question whether mothers relied on their nurses showed the following results: a bit more than half of the respondents relied on their nurse (53.9%), and 46.1% did not rely. After analysing the reasons for distrust, it was noticed that out of 58 mothers who gave the negative answer, one third (32.8%) lacked information about infant nursing, 22.4% were visited by the nursing staff only once or twice during the 6-month period, and the same percentage of the respondents pointed out that the nurse was always in a hurry and did not pay enough attention to solving infant nursing problems (Figure).

## DISCUSSION

The following issues were evaluated when analysing data of the 152 questionnaires: the most frequent infant nursing care problems that occur during the 1<sup>st</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months of infant's life, persons helping mothers to solve the problems, and how parents evaluate the work of nurses visiting them at home.

The analysis showed that the frequency of infant nursing care problems that occurred during the 1<sup>st</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months conformed to nursing care problems that are emphasized in the literature and are different in each month (12–15). Regarding the 1<sup>st</sup> month, the respondents complained more often about breast-feeding and umbilical care problems; in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> months abdominal problems prevailed, and in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> months complementary feeding needs occurred.

Comparison of infants' age and problem frequency showed that nursing needs were "growing" with the infants: in the 1<sup>st</sup> month the problem frequency was 62.4% while in the 6<sup>th</sup> month 77.3% ( $p < 0.05$ ).

If we compare the doctor's and the nurse's role in solving infant nursing care problems, we can observe that when the child is growing his / her mother consults a doctor more often (in the 1<sup>st</sup> month – 30.0% and in the 6<sup>th</sup> month – 56.3% of the respondents) than a nurse (22.7% and 16.2% respectively).

Mothers very rarely apply to a nurse when they experience infant nursing care problems. Thus, community nurses and paediatric nurses should put more efforts to obtain mothers' trust in solving infant nursing care problems. Medicinal problems should not be solved by family members; the family members may just share their experience.

Analysis of home visit frequency during the 1<sup>st</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months showed that during the 1<sup>st</sup> month nurses visited infants more often once per month than once per week as obliged. According to the Order No. 301 issued by the Health Minister of the Republic of Lithuania on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2000, nurses together with physicians should make the first home visit within the first three days after newborns leave the delivery department. During the 1<sup>st</sup> month the nursing staff should make home visits once per week and during the 2<sup>nd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months once per month.

During the first home visit it is important to evaluate the delivery department information about the newborn, parents' answers to the questions on her / his status, feeding, sleep, changes in behaviour, etc. Hygienic characteristics of the newborn's environment, family's preparedness to take nursing care (cleanliness, orderliness, handling of the infant, etc.), the newborn's and mother's health status are also evaluated, advice on newborn nursing care and feeding is given, appropriate help is provided according to the situation, relationships among family members are evaluated, physical growth parameters are recorded in the growth chart (weight, length, head and chest circumferences) (16).

We searched for the information on how community nurses perform infant nursing care home visits in other countries. In Great Britain, a maternity nurse takes nursing care of a newborn. Maternity nurses usually visit homes on demand. The team consists of a maternity nurse, a general practitioner, a social worker and a community nurse. The community nurses visit infants since their 2<sup>nd</sup> month of life (17).

In the USA (New York, Tennessee, Colorado state) community nurses are being trained in a two-week course and are allowed to have no more than 25 families in their area. They start their visits since the 2<sup>nd</sup> term of pregnancy and continue them till the child is two years old. The frequency of these visits mainly depends on the family needs and they can be made once a week or once a month accordingly. The visit lasts 75 to 90 minutes. The nurse cooperates with the family, consults and teaches the parents. These consultations can be classified into three categories: 1. Knowledge being provided to mothers and fixing of the knowledge obtained. 2. Newborn / infant nursing care. 3. Pregnancy planning.

The nurses are carrying out a special home nursing care program aimed at ensuring a better child nursing care. The parents are being taught how to understand, take nursing care and solve all child nursing care problems (17, 18).

The mothers' wishes on visit frequency were approximately in agreement with the schedule set by the order No. 301: during the 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> months fortnightly and during the 3<sup>rd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months once per month ( $p < 0.05$ ).

In order to ensure harmonised infant growth and development, timely problem solving and positive mothers' attitude towards the work of nurses, the nursing staff should pay more attention to meeting infant nursing care needs, teaching mothers to take care of their infants and making home visits regularly required by the order No. 301.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The most frequent infant nursing care problems that occur in the 1<sup>st</sup>–the 6<sup>th</sup> months are:

- in the 1<sup>st</sup> month of their infants' life the respondents more often complained of breastfeeding and umbilical care problems;
- in the 2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> months, the infants were more often discomforted by abdominal problems;
- in the 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months of infants' life, problems associated with complementary feeding occurred.

2. The respondents solved the infant nursing care problems that occurred in the 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> months most often with the help of relatives, while the infant nursing care problems arising in the 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months were more often solved by reading a special literature or consulting a doctor.

3. In the 1<sup>st</sup> month of infants' life, the nurses visited them most often once a month. In the 2<sup>nd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months, the nursing staff did not visit infants at home more often than once a month.

4. Nearly half of the respondents did not rely on the nursing staff.

5. The reasons for distrust in the nursing staff: one third of the respondents lacked the information about infant nursing care; 22.4% of mothers were visited at home very seldom and the same percentage pointed out that the nurse was in a hurry and did not pay attention enough to solve the infant nursing care problems.

## SUGGESTIONS

1. All the recommendations and advice that nurses usually give to mothers should cover the most frequent infant nursing care problems such as, for example, in the 1<sup>st</sup> month – feeding technique, skin and umbilical care, in the 2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> months – abdominal pains, the 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> months – complementary feeding, etc).

2. At the nurse training courses, more attention should be paid to the suckling breastfeeding technique, complementary feeding, umbilical and skin care and also to the prevention of gastrointestinal problems.

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## KŪDIKIŲ SLAUGA BENDRUOMENĖJE

### *S a n t r a u k a*

Tinkama kūdikių priežiūra yra aktuali kiekvienai naujai susikūrusiai šeimai, kuri planuoja turėti ar jau susilaukė pirmagimio, taip pat ir bendruomenės slaugytojoms, kurioms dažnai tenka bendrauti su šeimomis, auginančiomis mažus vaikus.

**Darbo tikslas** – išsiaiškinti kūdikių iki šešių mėnesių slaugos problemai bei tėvų požiūrį į slaugytojos darbą.

**Tyrimo objektas ir metodai.** Tyrime, kuris vyko nuo 2005 m. gruodžio mėn. iki 2006 m. balandžio mėn., dalyvavo 152 motinos, auginančios 6 mėnesių ir vyresnius kūdikius. Pagal straipsnio autorių sudarytą 42 klausimų anketą apklausa vyko internetu, [www.tavovaikas.lt](http://www.tavovaikas.lt) ir [www.supermama.lt](http://www.supermama.lt) forumuose.

Tyrimo duomenys statistiškai apdoroti *SPSS 13.0 for Windows* programa.

**Tyrimo rezultatai.** Dažniausios kūdikių slaugos problemos 1–6 mėnesiais: pirmą kūdikio gyvenimo mėnesį respondentės dažniau skundėsi žindymo (24,8 proc.) ir bambutės priežiūros (19,9 proc.) problemomis nei odėlės priežiūra (12,8 proc.) ( $p < 0,05$ ). Antrą ir trečią gyvenimo mėnesį kūdikius dažniau vargino pilvuko nei žindymo ar neramaus miego problemos ( $p < 0,05$ ). Ketvirtą kūdikio gyvenimo mėnesį pilvuko problemos vis dar buvo aktualesnės (20,8 proc.) nei dantukų dygimas (14,4 proc.) ( $p < 0,05$ ). Penktą ir šeštą gyvenimo mėnesį atsiranda papildomo maitinimo poreikis ( $p < 0,05$ ).

**Išvados.** Iškilus kūdikio slaugos problemoms, motinos labai retai kreipiasi į slaugytoją. 1–3 mėnesį atsiradusius kūdikių slaugos klausimus respondentės dažniau padėjo išspręsti artimieji. 4–6 mėnesį sprendamos rūpimas problemas respondentės dažniau atsakymo ieškojo specialioje literatūroje arba kreipėsi į gydytoją.

Pirmąjį kūdikio gyvenimo mėnesį slaugytojos dažniausiai lankėsi kartą per mėnesį, 2–6 kūdikių gyvenimo mėnesiais – ne dažniau kaip kartą per mėnesį.

Beveik pusė respondenčių nepasitiki slaugos personalu.

**Raktažodžiai:** kūdikis, slaugos poreikiai, bendruomenės slaugytojas, slaugos problemos