

**BREASTFEEDING TRENDS AND DIFFERENTIALS IN LATIN AMERICA: RESULTS
FROM THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEYS**

Rubén Grajeda, M.D.

Rafael Pérez-Escamilla, Ph.D.

**Department of Nutritional Sciences
University of Connecticut, Storrs, Conn.**

**Instituto de Nutrición de Centro América y Panamá
Guatemala City, Guatemala**

Storrs, CT. July 10, 2001.

ABSTRACT

A secondary data analysis was conducted with data collected between 1985 and 1999 as part of the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) program in six Latin American countries. This study was conducted with the aim of determining the secular trends of breastfeeding duration in urban and rural areas in Latin American countries with two or more DHS and to identify in each country risk factors for shorter breastfeeding duration. The average duration of breastfeeding and lactational amenorrhea were estimated following the prevalence/incidence method among children 24 months old or younger. Multivariate logistic regression analysis was used to evaluate the secular breastfeeding trends in Latin America. Results of this study showed that with both the prevalence/incidence and the multiple logistic regression method, all countries showed an increase in breastfeeding duration (delta range: 0.41 months for Dominican Republic to 2.62 months for Peru). The major increase in breastfeeding duration was found in urban areas (delta range: 0.14 months in Guatemala to 4.95 months in Peru) probably as a consequence of hospital-based breastfeeding promotion campaigns targeting urban areas. Risk factors of shorter breastfeeding duration identified in this study were: living in an urban area, higher maternal educational level, maternal employment, delivery assisted by a doctor, and being a primiparous woman. Major effort should be done in this region to sustain the improvements on breastfeeding practices.

Key words: Breastfeeding, breastfeeding promotion, Caribbean, Latin America

INTRODUCTION