

## **Breastfeeding in Zadar County – the impact of socio-demographic and psychobiological factors**

**Stivena Markulin<sup>1</sup>, Nataša Skitarelić\*<sup>1,2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health Studies, University of Zadar, Zadar, Croatia

<sup>2</sup> Zadar General Hospital, Zadar, Croatia

The presenting author: Nataša Skitarelić ([naskitarelic@unizd.hr](mailto:naskitarelic@unizd.hr), +385 23 400414)

**Introduction:** The importance of breastfeeding is in the nutritional, psychosocial, immunological, cognitive, practical and economic aspects of the child's development and the mother's health.

**Objective:** To investigate the influence of some sociodemographic and psychobiological factors to breastfeeding in Zadar County.

**Participants and methods:** 155 young mothers from Zadar County voluntarily participated in the research. The survey questionnaire examined the influence of some sociodemographic and psychobiological factors on the choice and duration of breastfeeding. The data was statistically processed.

**Results:** The participants were on average 31 years old, mostly married, employed, of good economic status and living in their own families. The age of the mothers and consumption of tobacco products are significant predictors for the duration of breastfeeding. The level of education and previous experience in breastfeeding show a tendency of significance, while economic status, time of decision to start breastfeeding, consumption of alcohol and attending maternity classes have no statistically significant predictive value. The partners, as well as their mothers, have the greatest influence and support the participants to breastfeed. The average duration of breastfeeding was 4.2 months and at 9.5 months adapted milk was introduced into the babies' nutrition.

**Conclusion:** Different factors influence the decision and duration of breastfeeding. Young mothers in Zadar County apply exclusively short breastfeeding and start early with introducing supplements, against the recommendations of the World Health Organization.

**Key words:** breastfeeding, factors, influence