

 

# Psychosocial Predictors of Exclusive Breastfeeding Duration to six Months

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## Abstract

**Background:** The World Health Organization recommend that for optimal growth and development all infants worldwide should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life. Previous studies have identified that psychosocial factors are important for the maintenance of exclusive breastfeeding. This study aimed to examine the psychosocial factors associated with exclusive breastfeeding duration to six months postpartum. **Method:** 125 women completed questionnaires at three time points; 32 weeks gestation, two and six months postpartum. Self-efficacy, body attitude, psychological adjustment, attitude, intention, confidence, motivation and importance of exclusive breastfeeding and breastfeeding status were measured. **Findings:** At 32 weeks gestation a woman's confidence to achieve exclusive breastfeeding was a predictor of exclusive breastfeeding to six months postpartum. At two months postpartum, psychological adjustment and self-efficacy were predictive of exclusive breastfeeding duration. At six months postpartum, psychological

adjustment, self-efficacy, confidence to maintain and feeling fat were predictive of exclusive breastfeeding duration. Conclusion: Self-efficacy, psychological adjustment, body image, motivation and confidence are important for the maintenance of exclusive breastfeeding to six months. This has clinical application for health psychology as antenatal breastfeeding education and postpartum support may be strengthened by strategies that build a woman's confidence to exclusively breastfeed.

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