

## BARRIERS TO BREASTFEEDING EXPERIENCED BY HIV-POSITIVE MOTHERS AT A NON-GOVERNMENTAL HEALTH CENTRE, LIMPOPO

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**Introduction:** The benefits of breastfeeding are well recognised and include significantly decreased infant morbidity and mortality rates by providing optimal nutrition, protecting babies against common childhood infections such as gastrointestinal and respiratory infections, and by promoting child spacing. Breastfeeding is particularly important in resource-poor regions of the world, where limited access to clean water increases the risk of diarrhoeal disease if replacement feeding is used. However, human immunodeficiency virus type 1 (HIV-1) is transmitted through human milk, leading to the dilemma of increased use of replacement feeding in resource-poor settings, although protecting the infant against HIV-1 infection could also place the infant at risk of mortality from other infections (Shearer 2008:1046). **Purpose of the study:** The purpose of this study was to describe the determinants contributing to exclusive breastfeeding in HIV infected mothers of infants aged 0 – 6 months who attend an NGO Health Centre in Elandsdoorn village. **Methods:** A quantitative research approach using a non-experimental cross-sectional study was undertaken to conduct this study. A self-reported study questionnaire was used to collect data from study participants. Purpose sampling was used to sample 75 mothers from 18 to 45 years of age who were HIV

positive. SPSS version 22:0 was used to analyse the data. **Results:** The study results indicated that there are determinants contributing to exclusive breastfeeding and a need to establish a more comprehensive approach to educating the pregnant women on reproductive health issues and exclusive breastfeeding in particular infants this has caused mothers to cease from continuing with exclusive breastfeeding. **Conclusions:** The intention of this study is to reveal the determinants of exclusive breastfeeding affecting mothers who are HIV infected and breastfeeding their infants. It can be concluded that the majority of the respondents were not knowledgeable about all aspects of exclusive breastfeeding. Information dissemination during ANC consultations was not optimally received, and mothers did not experience the benefits of information giving. Therefore, other information giving methods need to be considered to ensure that learning takes place during ANC consultations. It is generally accepted that healthcare professionals are, to a degree, the custodians of health issues and are expected as such to share their expertise on the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding to the benefit of firstly the baby, then the mother, and lastly the community.