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AYE KYI KYI: FACTORS AFFECTING BREASTFEEDING IN THE PHILIPPINES. AN ANALYSIS OF 1998 NDHS DATA. THESIS ADVISORS: CHAI PODHISITA Ph.D., BUPPHA SIRIRASSAMEE, Ph.D., ISBN 974-664-647-8

This study aimed to find out factors affecting breast-feeding in the Philippines. Data from Philippines National Demographic and Health Survey, 1998 was used in this study. Women of reproductive age (15-49) years, having children up to 3 years of age were selected for the study. The sample consisted of 4527 women (1787 in urban and 2740 in rural areas).

In this study, both descriptive and analytical statistics were used. Descriptive statistics revealed a general pattern. Ninety per cent of the sample women had ever breastfed their index children. About eighty per cent of them initiated breast-feeding within 24 hours after birth. Mean duration of breast-feeding was found as 10.3 months. Almost seventy per cent of the sample women introduced supplementary feeding within four months after delivery.

To analyze the factors affecting breast-feeding, 13 variables were selected and they were grouped into demographic (age of mother, parity, current pregnancy status, residence, sex of child and birth order of child), socioeconomic (mother's education, father's education, mother's occupation and household economic level), and health service factors (number of antenatal visits, place of delivery and advice on breast-feeding). Both bivariate and multivariate statistics were employed for analysis. Almost all hypotheses were accepted by bivariate analysis using Chi-square test. However, after using multiple regression to determine the effect of each independent variable, some of the relationships from bivariate analysis changed. After controlling other independent variables, the mother's age was found as a major determinant of breast-feeding in the Philippines. Other important factors were residence, household economic level and place of delivery. Contrary to expectations, occupation of the mother does not make a marked difference in duration of breast-feeding.

Therefore, it is necessary to encourage young mothers, urban women, women from households with high economic level and women who delivered the baby at private health facility because they breastfed the shortest duration. From this study, it is recommended that future research should be conducted to find out the mother's knowledge of and attitude towards breast-feeding practices for necessary interventions.