

## **Determinants of Cessation of Exclusive Breastfeeding in Ankesha Guagusa Woreda, Awi Zone, Northwest Ethiopia: A Cross-Sectional Study**

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**Abstract :** Background: Exclusive breast-feeding (EBF) is the practice of feeding only breast milk (including expressed breast milk) during the first six months and no other liquids and solid foods except medications. The time to cessation of exclusive breast-feeding, however, is different in different countries depending on different factors. Studies showed the risk of diarrhea morbidity and mortality is higher among none exclusive breast-feeding infants, common during starting other foods. However, there is no study that evaluated the time to cessation of exclusive breast-feeding in the study area. The aim of this study was to show time to cessation of EBF and its predictors among mothers of index infants less than twelve months old. Methods: We conducted a community-based cross-sectional study from February 13 to March 3, 2012 using both quantitative and qualitative methods. This study included a total of 592 mothers of index infant using multi-stage sampling method. Data were collected by using interviewer administered structured questionnaire. Bivariate and multivariate Cox regression analyses were performed. Results: Cessation of exclusive breast-feeding occurred in 392 (69.63%) cases. Among these, 224 (57.1%) happened before six months, while 145 (37.0%) and 23 (5.9%) occurred at six months and after six months of age of the index infant respectively. The median time for infants to stay on exclusive breast-feeding was 6.36 months in rural and 5.13 months in urban, and this difference was statistically significant on a Log rank (Cox-mantel) test. Maternal and paternal occupation, place of residence, postnatal counseling on exclusive breast-feeding, mode of delivery, and birth order of the index infant were significant predictors of cessation of exclusive breast-feeding. Conclusion: Providing postnatal care counseling on EBF, routine follow-up and support of those mothers having infants stressing for working mothers can bring about implementation of national strategy on infant and young child feeding.

**Keywords :** exclusive breastfeeding, cessation, median duration, Ankesha Guagusa Woreda

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