ABSTRACT

This cross sectional study was conducted with the aim of examining the breastfeeding practices among mothers in Nakhon Pathom province and the relationship between breastfeeding practices and social support, namely information, instrumental and emotional supports during the breastfeeding period. The sample studied was 120 mothers whose last children aged from 4 months to 2 years old, and visited Nakhon Pathom provincial hospital during March, 2001 for their children’s vaccinations.

The results of the study showed that the median duration of full breastfeeding and total breastfeeding was 7.1 weeks and 12 months, respectively. There was a significant relationship (p-value < 0.001) between social support and duration of breastfeeding with positive correlation. Among these types of social support, instrumental support was what most mothers received from their husbands and mothers. It was the most important determinant influencing the duration of breastfeeding. The types of work classified as indoor and outdoor, as well as the structures of the family were also found to have association with duration of breastfeeding. These findings would be helpful for healthcare policy makers to find out the proper approaches for breastfeeding programs. The fully tangible and emotional supports from family members, especially from their husbands and their mothers would be critical roles used to reduce the mothers’ workload and encourage their decision to breastfeed.