Elderly’s Attitude and Perceived Barriers towards Breastfeeding Promotion *

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Abstract

Purpose: Elderly are very influential persons in promoting breastfeeding. The purpose of this study was to determine elderly’s attitude and perceived barriers towards breastfeeding promotion. Comparisons of their attitudes and perceived barriers among different genders and age groups are also examined.

Design: A comparative descriptive design.

Methods: The study subjects were member of the Health Promotion in Elderly Project, Faculty of Nursing, Mahidol University. The sample consisted of 75 elderly who were 60 years of age or over and able to read and write Thai. Data were collected using a set of self-administered questionnaires. Descriptive statistics and t-test were used for the data analysis.

Main findings: Nearly half (43.8%) of the elderly highly promoted breastfeeding while 28.8% rarely or never. Almost half (48%) reported their efficacy in promoting breastfeeding as high to very high levels. An average of attitude score towards breastfeeding promotion was 3.10 (SD = 0.26) with a range from 1-4. The attitude was not statistically different between men and women (t (73) = - .072, p > .05), and between younger (≤ 70 years of age) and older (> 70 years of age) groups (t (73) = .793, p > .05). Average score of perceived barriers was 2.39 (SD = 0.56) with a range from 1-4. The statistically significant difference in their perception of barriers was not found between men and women (t (69) = - .889, p > .05), but between the younger and the older groups (t (69) = - .54, p < .05). That is, the older they were, the more barriers they perceived.

Conclusion and recommendations: The findings suggest that to promote elderly volunteers in “talking” about breastfeeding, it is essential to raise their confidence, especially those who are over 70, with regard to self-worth of being an elderly, and educate them to have precise and updated knowledge of breastfeeding as well as effective communication with a new generation.

Keywords: attitude, breastfeeding promotion, elderly, perceived barriers