



Breastfeeding images on the Internet: iconographic analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Internet platforms have been used as an instantaneous source of information related to the health area. Concerning to breastfeeding, we can identify a variety of websites and Internet pages. It can be alarming even for the experienced researcher, creating doubts regarding how the mothers deal with and use the Internet for obtaining information on breastfeeding and feeding young children. The analysis of breastfeeding images on the Internet allows the discussion about the importance of iconographic representation to promote this practice.

The aim of this study was to analyze breastfeeding images available on the Internet websites in Portuguese language according to the WHO recommendation for breastfeeding.

METHODS

This was a descriptive and cross sectional study conducted with a purposive sampling of the sites on the Internet. using the Google search mechanism.

Data were selected using the keywords: “aleitamento materno” and “amamentação” (both mean breastfeeding). The first 30 results were stored using the URL.

After follow the eligibility criteria, we selected and analyse five images from five websites.

Iconographic analysis was used in the images, focusing on the symbolic role of each image in order to understand the characteristics and elements that could be visually significant according to the Brazilian context.

RESULTS

Sites were described according as follow:

- 4 sites were Brazilian and one site was Portuguese;
- 3 of them had breastfeeding as their main subject;
- 4 of them had mothers and fathers as their target population.
- All texts that accompanied images supported breastfeeding.

- ✓ All images presented breastfeeding using appropriate techniques.
- ✓ **Woman's face was not visible or apparent in any image**, only the woman's breast appeared during the act of breastfeed.
- ✓ On the other hand, **babies being breastfeed were showed fully in the images.**

CONCLUSIONS

Subjectivity of each woman was not valued in the images since they reduced the importance of the woman only to the breast. Due to being faced with images that do not reflect their perceptions, women may become demotivated and less confident to breast-feeding. Internet users should valorize the woman as the protagonist in this process in order to respect them and to promote breastfeeding.

REFERENCES

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