Abstracts

The Goal The aim of this study was to examine the effectiveness of structured education about breast-feeding using a sample of high-school students. The results presented in this study are part of the results of wider research, currently on-going, into the influence of structured education on breast-feeding on changes to the intentions, knowledge and attitudes of pupils and students.

Methods The study was longitudinal, quasi-experimental, and approved by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia. The experimental group consisted of 30 students from the Medical High School in Bjelovar, and the control group consisted of 30 other students from the same school. The experimental group took a structured educational course on breast-feeding, and the control group did not. The attitudes, intentions and knowledge of the subjects were measured using a validated BIAKQ questionnaire. In both groups the questionnaire was conducted twice, with a two-week interval. The outcomes measured were the changes to the total results of the BIAKQ questionnaire and the subscales of the questionnaire. In processing the results, the following statistical procedures were used: presentation of the results by frequencies, percentages, arithmetic means and standard deviations, analysis of outliers and the normality of distribution of the results (Skewness and Kurtosis z values, Histogram, Q-Q diagram, Box diagram, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests), analysis of the differences between the results (t-test or the Mann-Whitney test and Wilcoxon test), and correlations are presented using Spearman’s correlation coefficient.

Results Before the educational course, in relation to intentions, attitudes, knowledge and the overall results of the questionnaire, there were no significant differences between the control and experimental groups. After the experimental group had taken the educational course, the subjects achieved better results in comparison to the control group in terms of their intentions (ME=38.03, SD=5.71, MK=35.27, SD=5.41, t(58)=1.76, p=0.08), attitudes (MdnE=35.52, MdnK=25.48, U=299.5, p<0.03), knowledge (MdnE=35.97, MdnK=25.03, U=286.0, p<0.01) and the total results of the questionnaire (MdnE=35.27, MdnK=35.03, U=299.5, p<0.03). The results of the subjects in the experimental group after the course were also better in relation to their own results before the course, in terms of their intentions (M=4.40, SD=5.61, t(29)=4.30, p<0.00), attitudes (M=13.40, SD=15.37, t(29)=4.77, p<0.00), knowledge (MdnPos=8.85, MdnNeg=9.5, Z=-1.883, p=0.06) and total results (MdnPos=15.69, MdnNeg=9.0, Z=-4.121, p=0.00). The greatest correlation in the total results of the questionnaire after the course were shown by attitudes (r=0.99, p<0.00), and the smallest by knowledge, before (r=0.39, p=0.04) and after (r=0.29, p=0.12) the educational course.

Conclusion The results confirm statistically significantly improved attitudes, intentions and knowledge regarding breastfeeding in the experimental group after taking the educational course. Earlier research by the author and research by others confirm that education that only brings about changes in knowledge does not necessarily also lead to changes in attitudes and intentions. Only a well-designed and structured model of education, with a multi-dimensional approach can lead to changes in attitudes and intentions, which are important predictors of behaviour. Further research is needed to define more precisely the age at which education gives the best results.
Aim To evaluate the demographic, electroclinical characteristics and outcome of CwG in children hospitalized in 6 Croatian centers in the period from 2008 to 2018.

Methods We used data from pre-school children’s health service, where about 90% of preschool children receive health care, obtained through Central Health Information System of the Republic of Croatia. Number of contacts with health care providers, examinations and counselling, as well as number of issued referrals and prescriptions during 2019 and 2020, for children up to six years of age, in curative-care, were analyzed.

Results During 2020, 232,583 children sought health care in pre-school children’s health service, which is a decrease of 2.7% in regard to 2019, when 239,148 children were registered. The number of contacts with health care, which includes visits, examinations, telecommunications etc., also decreased, by 16.6% (2020: 1,977,417; 2019: 2,372,249). In curative-care examinations a decrease of 42.0% was recorded (2020: 704,584; 2019: 1,214,178), but an increase of 12.0% was recorded in curative-counselling (2020: 1,016,716; 2019: 907,894), with 80% increase in curative-counselling by e-mail and/or telephone.

The number of issued referrals and prescriptions also shows a decrease in 2020 compared to 2019. During 2020, 410,933 referrals were issued, and in 2019 530,626 referrals, which is a decrease of 22.6%, however, the share of different types of referrals remained almost unchanged in both years, and the share of referrals to the hospital emergency departments did not increase either.

During 2019, 1,181,889 prescriptions were prescribed, with the highest share of beta-lactam penicillins – 13.3%. During 2020, 923,002 prescriptions were prescribed, a decrease of 21.9%, with the largest share of the subgroup of vitamins – 11.4%.

Conclusion By declaring the COVID-19 epidemic in Croatia, the Minister of Health, in order to protect the health of health-care workers and patients, recommended the maximum possible reduction of patients’ visits to medical practices and performing only urgent examinations and procedures during the epidemic, while increasing the availability of telecommunication contacts with patients. This analysis shows that in 2020, the use of health care in the pre-school children’s health service also decreased, but it was not significant. It is important to emphasize that although the number of examinations of sick children has decreased, the number of curative counselling has increased, especially those provided by phone and e-mail, which indicates a rapid response of pediatricians to the new situation and greater use of telecommunication channels in regular communication with parents which helped in maintaining the availability of health care system.

The decrease in the number of prescriptions can be explained by the closure of preschools in the spring of 2020 and the subsequent lower frequency of contact among children, but requires more detailed morbidity analyzes and the analyzes of possible SARS-CoV-2 impact on other pathogens characteristic for that age.