Background Breastfeeding of preterm infants is not well researched in Denmark, although breast milk is of great importance for these infants because it protects against infections, decrease the risk for severe diseases (necrotizing enterocolitis and retinopathy), and breastfeeding strengthens bonding and attachment between mother and infant. Many factors can influence breastfeeding of preterm infants. Some are related to the mother and infant, while some are related to unit-specific factors at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). This study will highlight potential influencing factors.

Aim To investigate how many preterm infants are breastfed exclusively at discharge, and breastfeeding duration. To examine which conditions in infants, mothers and NICUs that affect breastfeeding of preterm infants.

Method A multicenter exploratory longitudinal survey on breastfeeding of preterm infants in all NICUs in Denmark with questionnaire answered by the mothers in beginning of hospitalisation and at the infants’ discharge, followed by telephone interviews in the infants’ first year.

Preliminary results More than 1400 preterm infants from 24 to 36 weeks of gestational age (mean 33 weeks and 4 days, SD 249 weeks) participated in the study. At discharge 68% were exclusively breastfed, 17% were partially breastfed and 15% were not breastfed. Further analysis will show which factors in infants, mothers and NICUs influence breastfeeding at discharge.

Conclusion Compared to most international research, preterm infants in Denmark have high breastfeeding rates at discharge from NICU.

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