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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

11TH MEETING OF YOUNG RESEARCHERS
UNIVERSITY OF PORTO

- **14240 | Characterization of the Food Habits in the First Year of Life in Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Barcelos**

Silva, Sara, Faculdade de Ciências da Nutrição e Alimentação, Portugal

Sousa, Sílvia, Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Barcelos, Portugal

Pereira, Bárbara, Faculdade de Ciências da Nutrição e Alimentação, Portugal

Breastfeeding is considered the ideal practice for the first six months of life and the onset of complementary food during the first year is essential for children's adequate nutritional status. Eating habits during the first years of life can determine later eating habits and food preferences. The present study aimed to characterize the food habits of children in the first year of life in Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Barcelos.

This was a cross-sectional study using a questionnaire that evaluated the prevalence of breastfeeding (BF) and exclusive breastfeeding (EBF), the onset of complementary feeding (CF) and the timing of introduction of solid food. This study also evaluated the children's food preferences and who decides their food habits (only parents or parents and health professionals). The sample comprised 114 children, predominantly female (55,3%), with a mean age of $21,8 \pm 9,4$ months.

Among the children, 95,9% were exclusively breastfed, the majority of them less than six months. The mean for EBF was $3,9 \pm 2,1$ months and for BF was $7,4 \pm 6,6$ months. The onset of CF was at $5,4 \pm 1,1$ months, with soup followed by fruits. Only 7 children consumed cow milk before completed 12 months. It was found that some foods were - in some cases - introduced too early (yogurt) or too late (pulses) in the children's diet.

The children's feeding habits were, in the most of cases, decided by their parents and health professionals ($n=59$; 54,6%). The children's food preferences were fruit ($n=87$; 82,1%), yogurt ($n=86$; 81,1%), and soup ($n=82$; 77,4%). In cases of feeding habits decided by parents and health professionals the children's food preferences were healthier than when feeding habits are only determined by parents.

In conclusion, despite the high prevalence, there was a low duration of EBF and an early CF. Promoting breastfeeding and healthy food habits are still a priority of action in Public Health.