

Breastfeeding is popular and widespread in Hungary

July 2022

Presentation of the research

In the KINCS survey, we looked at people's views on childbirth conditions and the services provided by the health visitor. The data was collected using a telephone questionnaire (CATI) method and 1000 people were interviewed. The sample is representative of the Hungarian population aged 18 years and over, according to sex, age, type of settlement and education level.

Sample characteristics

The survey was conducted between 9-22 June, 2022. The representative sample of 1000 people aged 18 and over was 46% male and 54% female. Nearly a third of respondents (32%) were aged over 60, 18% were aged 18-29, 16% were aged 30-39 and 19% were aged 40-49. The lowest proportion of respondents were aged 50-59 (15%).

44% of respondents have a primary education, 34% have a secondary education and 22% have a tertiary education. By marital status, 46% are married, 21% single, 15% are in a civil partnership, 8% divorced and 9% widowed.

18% of respondents live in Budapest, 20% in a county capital or a city with county status, 32% in another town and 29% in a town or village. In the survey, nearly three quarters of respondents, 71%, said they had children. 29% have one child, 44% have two children and a further 18% have three or more children. 38% of respondents with children had a child under 18 at the time of the survey.

The proportion living alone in the sample is 17%. In households with more than one person 47% of respondents live with their spouse, 39% with their child/children, 15% with their partner and 14% with their parents. 65% of respondents live with their siblings and 2% with their grandparents. Most people live in a two-person household (35%), followed by households of four or more (26%) and then three individuals (19%).

In terms of employment, we see that 55% of respondents are employed, 29% are retired, 5% receive infant care fee, child care allowance or child-raising support, 5% are students and 4% are unemployed.

Concerning their financial situation, 44% of respondents said that they can get by on their income, 29% have just enough monthly income and 15% live without financial concerns. The proportion of those who have financial problems every month is 8% and 1% live in poverty. 78% of respondents have seen their income remain the same, 13% have seen their income increase and a further 7% have seen their income decrease in the previous month.

Executive summary

- **8 out of 10 responses (81%) think breast milk is better than baby formula for feeding a young child.**

- 69% of parents of young children think breast milk is best for a baby, 6% think formula is best for a baby, and one in four thinks both formula and breast milk are acceptable for a baby.
- **A relative majority of respondents think that you can breastfeed your baby for at least a year (36%) or longer (31%), or for as long as you want (31%).** A fifth of respondents (22%) think that breastfeeding is ideal for at least the first few months. 5% of respondents said that if the mother does not have milk, formula is adequate. **The majority of respondents think that 'every drop of breast milk is a treasure' (97%) and that breast milk is the best possible food for a baby (97%).**
- 88% of those surveyed agree that breastfed babies are healthier and more balanced, and 84% believe that breastfeeding establishes a close mother-child bond for life. Eight out of ten respondents believe that breastfeeding builds trust between mother and child.
- **Nine out of ten Hungarians are familiar with the health visitor service.**
- Despite the fact that the vast majority of people have heard of the health visitor service, **only slightly more than a quarter (27%) knew for sure that the organisation has a 107 year history in Hungary.**
- Hungarian people think that health visitors play an important role in infant care. **The highest level of agreement was with the statement that health visitors provide parents with useful advice on feeding their babies (84%),** while the lowest level of agreement was with the importance of their role in preparing for birth, but it is important to note that even here the level of agreement was 77%.
- 79% of respondents agree that health visitors are of great help to the mother and family during pregnancy and after the birth of the child(ren).
- 82% of those who completed the questionnaire think that health visitors help parents to take good care of their baby.
- 77% of respondents agree that health visitors play an important role in preparing mothers for childbirth.
- **An overwhelming majority (92%) think it is important for the father to spend as much time as possible at home in the weeks after the birth.**
- **The majority of people (85%) consider the hospital to be the best place to deliver a baby.**
- **Almost three quarters of adults (72%) support father-accompanied births,** and just under a fifth do not think it is a good idea for the father to be present at the birth (19%).
- The highest proportion supporting the presence of the father at the birth of their child (87%) are those between the ages of 18-29.