

Studying nutrition and health among infants of immigrant mothers: Recruitment challenges in the InnBaKost study

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Background: The InnBaKost study aims at identifying what young children with immigrant mothers (from Somalia and Iraq) in Norway eat, at children's ages 6, 12 and 24 months. This presentation describes challenges experienced and solutions applied when recruiting mothers for the quantitative sub-study.

Method: Mothers emigrated from Somalia and Iraq living in Oslo, Akershus and Buskerud who had 6-month old infants were eligible for inclusion. Identification of the eligible mothers was done through: (1) health centers in Oslo, Akershus and Buskerud, which should inform the mothers and submit their contact information; and (2) lists over eligible mothers obtained from the National Population Register. The lists were used in different ways: (a) sending information letters; (b) calling the mothers who had a registered telephone number; and (c) visiting the mothers at their registered addresses. The "snowball method" was also used.

Results: The recruitment process took one year instead of the planned period of 6 months, and 107 mothers of Somali and 80 mothers of Iraqi origin were recruited. The initial recruitment method, via the health stations, was inefficient and led to the recruitment of only 12% of the total sample during one year. During the same period, we sent letters and called eligible women based on the lists from the National Population Register, which led to recruitment of 10% and 50% of the total sample, respectively. After 9 months, we asked the regional ethical committee (REK) for permission to visit the mothers at their address. Permission was obtained, and this method proved to be most successful (recruited 20% of the total sample during three months). In addition, 8% were recruited through the snowball method throughout the sampling period.

Conclusion: Visiting the eligible mothers at their home address was the most efficient way of recruitment.

Significance for further research: Lessons learned from this study can be useful in other studies of immigrant's health and nutritional situation.

Key Reference:

Garduno-Diaz SD, Husain W, Ashkanani F, Kokhar S. Meeting challenges related to the dietary assessment of ethnic minority populations. *J. Hum. Nutr. Diet.* **2013**