



Nursing knowledge on breastfeeding: a scoping review protocol mapping assessment data, diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes

Cristina Couto ^{1,2,3}  0000-0001-5831-1352
Clara Roquette-Viana ⁴  0000-0002-9629-4618
Sandra Patrícia Souto ⁵  0000-0003-2206-7540
Ana Paula Prata ⁵  0000-0001-7552-9716

¹ Faculty of Health Sciences and Nursing, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Porto, Portugal

² RISE-Health, Santa Maria Health School, Porto, Portugal

³ Obstetrics/Gynecology Service, Tâmega e Sousa Local Health Unit, Penafiel, Portugal

⁴ Faculty of Health Sciences and Nursing, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisboa, Portugal.

⁵ RISE-Health, Nursing School, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal

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Corresponding Author:

Cristina Manuela Ferreira Couto;
Faculty of Health Sciences and
Nursing, Portuguese Catholic
University, Porto, Portugal;
s-cmfcouto@ucp.pt

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Breastfeeding is a dynamic process that may require professional support for successful initiation and continuation. Nurses and nurse-midwives play a key role in breastfeeding care, as it constitutes a specific focus of nursing clinical judgement. The nursing process involves the systematic collection and interpretation of assessment data, which informs the identification of nursing diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes related to breastfeeding. However, knowledge underpinning the nursing process in breastfeeding care remains dispersed across the literature.

Objectives: To map the available evidence on assessment data, diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes addressing breastfeeding within the context of nursing practice.

Methodology: This scoping review will consider studies involving nurses and nurse-midwives (Participants) examining breastfeeding-related assessment data, diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes associated with the nursing focus “Breastfeeding” (Concept), across all healthcare settings where breastfeeding care is provided (Context). The review will follow *Joanna Briggs Institute* (JBI) methodology and be reported according to PRISMA-ScR guidelines. A three-step search strategy was applied to databases accessed via EBSCOhost, Scopus, and Web of Science.

Results: Data will be extracted independently by two reviewers using a predefined tool. Extracted information will include study characteristics, participant details, breastfeeding-related assessment data, nursing diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes. Findings will be synthesised using descriptive statistics and inductive analysis and presented narratively.

Conclusion: This scoping review will map evidence on assessment data, diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes related to the nursing focus “Breastfeeding” to clarify conceptual boundaries, identify knowledge gaps, and inform clinical reasoning and future research.

Contributions: Conceptualization: CC and APP; Data curation: CC and SPS; Formal analysis: CC and APP; Investigation: CC and SPS; Methodology: CC, CRV and APP; Project administration: CC; Resources: APP and CRV; Software: CC and SPS; Supervision: APP and CRV; Validation: CC and APP; Visualization: CC and SPS; Writing – original draft: CC; Writing – review & editing: CC, CRV, SPS and APP.

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Autor correspondente:

Cristina Manuela Ferreira Couto;
Faculdade de Ciências da Saúde e
Enfermagem, Universidade
Católica Portuguesa, Porto,
Portugal; s-cmfcouto@ucp.pt

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RESUMO

Introdução: A amamentação é um processo dinâmico que pode requerer apoio profissional para a sua iniciação e continuação bem-sucedidas. Enfermeiros e enfermeiros obstetras desempenham um papel fundamental nos cuidados relacionados com o processo de amamentação, sendo este reconhecido como um foco específico do julgamento clínico de enfermagem. O processo de enfermagem envolve a recolha e interpretação sistemática de dados de avaliação, que sustentam a identificação de diagnósticos de enfermagem, objetivos, intervenções e resultados relacionados com a amamentação. No entanto, o conhecimento que fundamenta o processo de enfermagem nos cuidados relacionados com a amamentação permanece disperso na literatura.

Objetivos: Mapear a evidência disponível sobre dados de avaliação, diagnósticos, objetivos, intervenções e resultados relacionados com a amamentação no contexto da prática de enfermagem.

Metodologia: Esta scoping review considerará estudos que envolvam enfermeiros e enfermeiros obstetras (Participantes) que examinem dados de avaliação, diagnósticos, objetivos, intervenções e resultados associados ao foco de enfermagem “Amamentação” (Conceito), em todos os contextos de cuidados de saúde onde a amamentação é desenvolvida (Contexto). A revisão seguirá a metodologia do Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) e será reportada de acordo com as orientações PRISMA-ScR. Foi aplicada uma estratégia de pesquisa em três etapas nas bases de dados acedidas via EBSCOhost, Scopus e Web of Science.

Resultados: Os dados serão extraídos de forma independente por dois revisores, utilizando um instrumento previamente definido. A informação extraída incluirá características dos estudos, dados dos participantes, dados de avaliação relacionados com a amamentação, diagnósticos de enfermagem, objetivos, intervenções e resultados. Os resultados serão sintetizados através de estatística descritiva e análise indutiva, sendo apresentados de forma narrativa.

Conclusões: Esta scoping review mapeará a evidência sobre dados de avaliação, diagnósticos, objetivos, intervenções e resultados relacionados com o foco de enfermagem “Amamentação”, com o objetivo de clarificar os limites conceptuais, identificar lacunas de conhecimento e informar o raciocínio clínico e a investigação futura.

Introduction

Breastfeeding is an interactive process between the mother and her infant that, as it is not entirely instinctive in humans, requires learning to be effectively established. Women during lactation benefit greatly from professional guidance and follow-up, as the continuation of breastfeeding is influenced by the family environment, peers, and the wider community factors that may at times hinder the development of a breastfeeding-supportive culture.¹ These considerations emphasise the relevance and necessity of sustained professional intervention.

Nurses and nurse-midwives play a central role in breastfeeding care.²⁻⁴ They provide continuous, 24-hour contact with women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, highlighting the importance of high-quality, evidence-informed care to promote optimal breastfeeding outcomes.

Grounded in the philosophy of care and core principles guiding nursing practice, these professionals systematically collect, analyse, and interpret data to support clinical reasoning regarding the mother-infant dyad in breastfeeding contexts, ultimately formulating accurate nursing diagnoses.^{5,6} Such data constitute fundamental units of information concerning the health and well-being of the mother-infant dyad, enabling the identification of actual or potential breastfeeding-related problems and opportunities to support optimal physiological and relational development.^{7,8}

The integration and interpretation of different data transform them into meaningful clinical information.⁷ This information enables the formulation of nursing diagnoses, defined by the International Council of Nurses⁶ as the label assigned by a nurse to a clinical judgement about a human response. Data collection and diagnostic reasoning are therefore essential steps within the nursing process, supporting the identification of nursing diagnoses, the definition of

goals, the implementation of nursing interventions, and the evaluation of outcomes. This process provides a systematic, rigorous, and efficient framework for organising clinical thinking, supporting sound decision-making, and guiding problem-solving that leads to the delivery of individualised and context-appropriate breastfeeding care.⁸

Within the scope of maternal and obstetric nursing, breastfeeding is recognised as a specific nursing diagnosis. According to the International Classification for Nursing Practice (ICNP),⁶ it refers to the infant's feeding pattern through milk provided directly from the breast. This behaviour - typically understood as exclusive breastfeeding - may involve challenges that require targeted nursing and nurse-midwifery support to ensure successful establishment and continuation.

Globally, persistently low breastfeeding rates,^{9,10} when measured against the World Health Organization (WHO) targets¹¹ and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals,¹² reflect these ongoing challenges and highlight the urgent need to strengthen clinical practice to optimise breastfeeding support. Identifying the data elements that inform breastfeeding-related diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes represents a valuable contribution to the systematic clinical reasoning of nurses and nurse-midwives, ultimately enhancing the nursing process and guiding clinical decision-making.

Decision-making is a constant element in nursing practice, particularly within the nurse-service user relationship during transitional situations, in which the nurse assumes a pivotal mediating role.⁸ This entails selecting among alternative courses of action based on the appraisal of available information, through the process of clinical judgement.¹³ Accordingly, clinically relevant information is fundamental to support informed decision-making, underscoring the importance of improving systems for the recording, storage, and accessibility of information.¹⁴ As highlighted by Florence Nightingale, who emphasised the significance of documenting clinical findings and their relationship with quality of care,¹⁵ contemporary nursing documentation plays a central role in communication, patient safety, and continuity of care.¹⁶ Furthermore, it provides an opportunity for critical reflection on practice and may act as a catalyst for change and innovation,¹⁶ with potential implications for the quality of breastfeeding care and related indicators. This rationale underpins the need for the present scoping review.

Scoping reviews¹⁷ constitute a form of evidence synthesis designed to map the key concepts informing a field of research, clarify working definitions, and delineate conceptual boundaries. They enable exploration of the breadth and depth of the available literature, summarise existing evidence, and identify gaps to inform future research. This approach is particularly relevant when the topic area is insufficiently defined to allow the formulation of more

specific review questions. This is precisely the case for the present review, which seeks to map and describe the assessment data, diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes related to breastfeeding, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of nursing knowledge in this field. Mapping this evidence may contribute to advancing knowledge of the nursing process, while informing future research, particularly with regard to the development of clinical reasoning in breastfeeding care.

A preliminary search of PROSPERO, EBSCOhost, and the Joanna Briggs Institute Evidence Synthesis database identified no ongoing or published scoping reviews addressing this topic, reinforcing the relevance of undertaking this work. While some studies¹⁸⁻²⁰ have examined breastfeeding-related nursing diagnoses and their documentation, the literature remains fragmented and lacks a comprehensive mapping of nursing knowledge on breastfeeding. Therefore, this scoping review aims to map the available evidence on assessment data, diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes addressing breastfeeding within the context of nursing practice, answering the review question: What evidence exists on nursing knowledge related to breastfeeding care, including assessment data, nursing diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes, across different clinical contexts? To further guide the scope of this review, the following sub-questions were formulated:

1. What assessment data related to breastfeeding care are reported in the literature?
2. What nursing diagnoses related to breastfeeding care are identified in the literature?
3. What goals for breastfeeding care are reported in the literature?
4. What nursing interventions for breastfeeding care are described in the literature?
5. What outcomes associated with breastfeeding care are reported in the literature?

Methodology

The proposed scoping review will be conducted in accordance with the JBI methodology for scoping reviews,¹⁷ ensuring a systematic, transparent, and reproducible approach. Reporting will adhere to the PRISMA-ScR guidelines^{21,22} (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Extension for Scoping Reviews), thereby enhancing methodological clarity and completeness.

To promote transparency and contribute to open scientific practice, this protocol has been preregistered on the Open Science Framework and is currently under embargo, accessible at: <https://osf.io/36n2g>. The review team is committed to documenting and reporting any amendments to this protocol. Any deviations from the planned methods will be formally recorded and made publicly available alongside the final scoping review report.

Inclusion criteria

The eligibility criteria are defined using the PCC mnemonic¹⁷ to describe the participants (P), concept (C), and context (C). Additional elements related to study designs (S) will also be specified, as outlined below:

Participants

Midwifery practice is often described using multiple and overlapping professional titles that are inconsistently and interchangeably applied across contexts, reflecting substantial international variation in educational pathways and certification requirements.²³ As breastfeeding constitutes a shared area of clinical practice between nursing and midwifery, this scoping review takes this variability into account while maintaining a clear focus on the nursing process and the use of standardised nursing diagnostic language.

Accordingly, this review will include studies involving nurses and nurse-midwives providing breastfeeding care, where elements of the nursing process are applied, described, or documented. Specifically, this includes nurses and nurse-midwives involved in the assessment of women and infants in breastfeeding care and applying the nursing process within recognised nursing classification systems. Eligible studies will include professionals working autonomously or within multidisciplinary teams, across the perinatal continuum, and engaged in systematic breastfeeding assessment as part of routine clinical practice.

All professionals meeting the International Council of Nurses (ICN) definition of “nurse” will be eligible for inclusion. According to the ICN:

A nurse is a professional who is educated in the scientific knowledge, skills and philosophy of nursing, and regulated to practice nursing based on established standards of practice and ethical codes. Nurses enhance health literacy, promote health, prevent illness, protect patient safety, alleviate suffering, facilitate recovery and adaptation, and uphold dignity throughout life and at end of life. They work autonomously and collaboratively across settings to improve health, through advocacy, evidence-informed decision-making, and culturally safe, therapeutic relationships. Nurses provide people-centred, compassionate clinical and social care, manage services, enhance health systems, advance public and population health, and foster safe and sustainable environments. Nurses lead, educate, research, advocate, innovate and shape policy to improve health outcomes.²⁴

Additionally, for the purposes of this review, the term nurse-midwife refers to professionals who hold recognised nursing qualifications and apply the nursing process and

standardised nursing diagnostic language within maternal and breastfeeding care contexts.

Concept

This scoping review considers elements of the nursing process relevant to breastfeeding care, with particular emphasis on the clinical reasoning processes underpinning nursing decision-making. This requires an understanding of the concept of exclusive breastfeeding as defined within the International Classification for Nursing Practice (ICNP),⁶ namely the infant’s feeding pattern through milk provided directly from the breast. The review also draws on the nursing ontology adopted by the Portuguese Order of Nurses,²⁵ which conceptualises breastfeeding as a dynamic process encompassing both the Secretory Process, relating to the secretion and excretion of milk, and the Interactive Behaviour associated with breastfeeding within the mother-infant dyad.

Within this conceptual framework, the concept of interest is nursing knowledge on breastfeeding, including assessment data, diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes. This review will consider evidence describing assessment activities and relevant subjective and objective data collected during maternal and infant assessment; clinical indicators used to assess breastfeeding; nursing diagnoses derived from these data, as operationalised within recognised nursing classification systems; established goals for breastfeeding care; nursing interventions addressing the needs of the mother-infant dyad; and observed outcomes. The focus is placed on nursing knowledge related to the care process in breastfeeding.

Context

This review will consider studies conducted in all healthcare settings where nursing and nurse-midwifery breastfeeding care is provided to mother-infant dyads, irrespective of sociocultural context. This may include: hospital-based maternity and neonatal units; primary care services; community maternal and child health settings; home visiting programmes; and specialised lactation support services, across the perinatal continuum.

Types of studies

Studies will be included if they report at least one of the following elements: assessment data, nursing diagnoses, goals, nursing interventions, or outcomes related to breastfeeding. This scoping review will include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods primary research studies. Eligible study designs include:

- Quantitative evidence: experimental and quasi-experimental studies, including randomised controlled trials, non-randomised controlled trials, before and after studies, and interrupted time-series studies; analytical

observational studies, including prospective and retrospective cohort studies, case-control studies, and analytical cross-sectional studies; descriptive observational studies, including case series, individual case reports, and descriptive cross-sectional studies.

- Qualitative evidence: studies using qualitative methodologies such as phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, qualitative description, action research, and feminist research.
- Other sources of evidence: Systematic reviews and meta-analyses; Textual evidence papers; Unpublished literature (e.g., dissertations, theses) that met the inclusion criteria.
- Limits: Only sources published in English, Portuguese or Spanish will be included, reflecting the language proficiency of the review team. Studies published from 1996 onwards will be considered, corresponding to the year of the first publication of the International Classification for Nursing Practice (ICNP®) Alpha Version by the International Council of Nurses (ICN)^{26,27} which is adopted in this protocol as a conceptual milestone. This decision reflects a deliberate focus on literature produced within the era of standardised nursing language, consistent with the contemporary framework advocated by the ICN. As such, the conceptual scope of this review is explicitly limited to post-1996 literature. This delimitation may exclude earlier literature addressing breastfeeding related elements of the nursing process through alternative systems or non-standardised terminology and will be considered when interpreting the findings.

Search strategy

The search strategy was developed and executed in accordance with JBI guidance for scoping reviews.¹⁷ It was designed to capture evidence on nursing knowledge related to breastfeeding, encompassing assessment data, diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes. A three-step search process will be undertaken. Although the search strategy has already been developed and applied, as presented in Table 1, this section describes the methodological approach.

1. Initial limited search: an initial search of MEDLINE and CINAHL (via EBSCOhost) was conducted to identify relevant studies. Text words contained in the titles and abstracts, as well as index terms used to describe the records, were analysed to inform the development of the search strategy. These are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Indexed terms and keywords.

PCC Element	MeSH	CINAHL	Keywords
Participants	Nurses Nurse Specialists Nurse Midwives	Nurse Nurses Nursing	Registered nurse Clinical nurse specialist Advanced practice nurse Nurse practitioner
Concept	Breast Feeding Nursing Process Nursing Assessment Goals Clinical Reasoning Clinical Decision-Making	Breastfeeding Breast-feeding Infant feeding Lactation Lactating	Breastfeeding Breastfeeding care Nursing data Assessment data Nursing diagnoses Nursing interventions Outcomes
Context	Ancillary Services, Hospital Home Care Services Hospitals, Maternity Community Health Services	Hospital Maternity Health services Community services	Hospital support services Home nursing Obstetric units Community healthcare

2. Full search strategy: a comprehensive search strategy incorporating all identified keywords and index terms was developed in collaboration with a senior research librarian and adapted for use across all selected databases. The search strategy was peer-reviewed in accordance with the PRESS (Peer Review of Electronic Search Strategies) guidelines to enhance its quality, transparency, and reproducibility. Where appropriate controlled vocabulary terms were unavailable or insufficient, relevant keywords were used to ensure comprehensive retrieval of evidence.
3. Comprehensive database search: a complete search was conducted using the EBSCOhost platform, which enables simultaneous searching across multiple databases (including CINAHL Ultimate, MEDLINE Ultimate, MedicLatina, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection). A single structured search strategy was applied consistently across all databases within the platform, ensuring coherence and reproducibility of the search process. This approach is consistent with the functionality of the EBSCOhost platform and facilitates efficient and transparent searching across multiple databases. Additionally, Scopus and Web of Science were searched. The reference lists of all included sources will be screened to identify additional relevant studies. Grey literature was searched using predefined sources, including ProQuest Dissertations & Theses and the Repositório Científico de Acesso Aberto de Portugal (RCAAP). The selection of these sources was informed by consultation with a senior research librarian, based on their relevance, accessibility, and coverage of academic and institutional outputs in the field, ensuring a focused and feasible approach to grey literature retrieval. Search details for each database are reported in Table 2.

Searches were conducted in March 2026. To ensure the currency of the evidence, an updated search may be performed prior to the final analysis and reporting of the review. To ensure methodological rigour, no limits were applied to the search strategy (with the exception of the

grey literature search). Eligibility criteria will be applied during the screening phase.

Table 2. Full search strategies for each database.

Databases	Boolean phrase	Results
CINAHL Ultimate (via EBSCOhost platform) Date: 30/03/2026	TI ((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE)) OR AB ((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE)) OR SU ((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE))	2174
MEDLINE Ultimate (via EBSCOhost platform) Date: 30/03/2026	TI ((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE)) OR AB ((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE)) OR SU ((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE))	2305
MedicLatina (via EBSCOhost platform) Date: 30/03/2026	TI ((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE)) OR AB ((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE)) OR SU ((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE))	40
Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection (via EBSCOhost platform) Date: 30/03/2026	TI ((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE)) OR AB ((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE)) OR SU ((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE))	65
Scopus Date: 30/03/2026	TITLE-ABS-KEY((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE))	5948
Web of Science Date: 30/03/2026	All fields (breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND (nurs*) AND ("assessment" OR "diagnos*" OR "documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE)	5475
ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Date: 03/03/2026.	((breastfeeding OR "breast feeding" OR lactation) AND ("nursing assessment" OR "nursing diagnos*" OR "nursing documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE))	638
Limits: English, Portuguese, and Spanish; 01/01/1996-present; source type – Dissertations & Theses.		
RCAAP Date: 18/03/2026	(breastfeeding AND ("nursing assessment" OR "nursing diagnoses" OR "nursing documentation" OR "goals" OR "interventions" OR "practice" OR "outcomes" OR "international classification for nursing practice" OR ICNP OR NANDA OR CIPE))	9
Limits: Source type – Dissertação de mestrado e Tese de doutoramento; Assunto – amamentação, breastfeeding, enfermagem, nursing.		
Total		16654

Source of evidence selection

All identified records will be imported into Rayyan (Qatar Computing Research Institute, Doha, Qatar),²⁸ where duplicates will be removed. A two-stage screening process will be applied:

1. Title and abstract screening: two independent reviewers will screen titles and abstracts using the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Before formal screening, the reviewers will independently pilot the eligibility criteria on a sample of records to calibrate their interpretation and ensure consistency in study selection. Any discrepancies will be discussed and resolved, and the eligibility criteria refined if necessary. Articles meeting the criteria, or for which relevance cannot be determined based on available information, will proceed to full-text review. During title and abstract screening, studies will be assessed based on the available information. Where information is insufficient to determine eligibility, this will be documented and considered during full-text screening.
2. Full-text screening: full texts of potentially eligible studies will be retrieved and assessed independently by two reviewers. Reasons for exclusion at this stage will be documented and reported.

Discrepancies at any stage will be resolved through consensus or consultation with a third reviewer. When necessary, authors of primary studies may be contacted to obtain missing or clarifying information. The study selection process will be reported using a PRISMA-ScR flow diagram.^{21,22}

All included studies will be managed using Clarivate Analytics EndNote 20® (Clarivate Analytics, Philadelphia, United States of America)²⁹ to ensure efficient reference management.

Results

Data extraction

Data will be extracted using a structured extraction tool developed by the review team and guided by the JBI methodology.¹⁷ This tool will capture information about: bibliographic details (title, author(s), year of publication, country of origin); study aims and design; participant characteristics, sample size, and setting/context; data elements used in breastfeeding assessment (subjective, objective); nursing diagnoses identified or discussed; goals related to breastfeeding care; nursing interventions; outcomes (measurable or observable states); additional data, including classification systems referenced (e.g., NANDA-I, ICNP, local taxonomies); and key findings relevant to the review question (Table 3).

The draft extraction tool will be pilot-tested on a small sample of included studies and refined as needed, with any modifications reported in the final review. Data extraction will be conducted independently by two reviewers; disagreements will be resolved through discussion or arbitration by a third reviewer. When necessary, study authors will be contacted to clarify or request missing data. Situations involving multiple reports of the same study, missing data, or data conversion will be carefully analysed and may justify exclusion if data integrity cannot be assured. Critical appraisal of individual sources of evidence will not be conducted, as the aim of this scoping review is to map the available evidence rather than to assess methodological quality.

Table 3. Data extraction tool.

Category	Description
Author(s)	Last name of the first author of the study
Year	Year of publication
Country	Country where the study was conducted
Title	Title of the study
Aim	Objectives of the study
Study Design	Type of study
Participants	Sample size and key participant characteristics
Context	Setting and context of care
Assessment data	Data elements (subjective or objective) collected by nurses to evaluate breastfeeding (maternal, infant, clinical, contextual, or instrument-based)
Nursing diagnoses	Clinical judgements regarding breastfeeding-related conditions or responses (explicit or implicit)
Goals	Intended or planned states to be achieved through nursing care in breastfeeding
Nursing interventions	Actions implemented by nurses to support breastfeeding
Outcomes	Measurable or observable states reflecting the results of nursing care related to breastfeeding
Additional data	Classification systems referenced (e.g., NANDA-I, ICNP, local taxonomies) and key findings relevant to the review

Analysis of the evidence

Extracted data will be mapped using descriptive and thematic approaches, consistent with JBI guidance for scoping reviews.¹⁷ Quantitative data will be summarised using descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, counts, distribution across settings or over time) to explore the occurrence and characteristics of assessment data, nursing diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes in breastfeeding care. Qualitative data will be analysed inductively to identify recurring concepts, patterns, and themes related to assessment data, diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes. ATLAS.ti^{®30} software will be used to support data analysis. Where overlap between primary studies and evidence syntheses is identified, this will be documented and considered during analysis. Findings from systematic reviews and meta-analyses will be presented separately from primary studies to avoid double counting and ensure clarity in the interpretation of evidence.

Presentation of the results

Findings will be presented in tabular and/or diagrammatic formats, aligned with the review objectives and reflecting the structure of the data extraction tool. Specifically, the results will map: diagnostic activities performed by nurses and nurse-midwives; the range of data elements used in breastfeeding assessment; nursing diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes related to breastfeeding care.

A narrative summary will accompany the visual and tabulated results, explaining their relevance to the review question and addressing: classification systems employed; gaps, inconsistencies, or limitations in the existing evidence; implications for nursing and nurse-midwifery practice, education, and research.

The final review will produce a comprehensive evidence map detailing what is known, what can be inferred, and what remains underexplored regarding assessment data, diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes in nursing and nurse-midwifery breastfeeding assessment.

Limitations

This scoping review may be limited by the restriction to studies published from 1996 onwards and in English, Portuguese, and Spanish, which may result in the exclusion of relevant evidence. In addition, the reliance on published and accessible sources may introduce potential publication bias. As this is a scoping review, no critical appraisal of included studies will be conducted, and therefore the findings will reflect the nature and extent of the available evidence rather than its methodological quality.

Conclusion

This protocol outlines a scoping review designed to systematically map the available evidence on assessment data, diagnoses, goals, interventions, and outcomes related to the nursing focus “Breastfeeding”. By clarifying conceptual boundaries and identifying knowledge gaps, this review may provide a foundation for future research and developments in clinical reasoning in breastfeeding care.

Funding

No specific funding was received for this study.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

Cristina Couto is a doctoral student, and Ana Paula Prata and Clara Roquette-Viana are the PhD supervisors. This

academic relationship does not constitute a conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was not required, as this study is a scoping review protocol based on publicly available data.

Data Availability

Data supporting the results will be provided on request.

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