

or to green stools (nine cases), one infant was markedly syphilitic, another had an abscess, and in ten cases there was a large initial loss (10 oz. or over), all these, barring one, were the babies of primiparæ between twenty and thirty; here again, as in class 2, the average weight of the babies at birth was over 6½ lb. (average 7½ lb.); in no case was the baby under 6½ lb. To this class belong seventeen elderly primiparæ, and twenty-seven primiparæ between the ages of twenty and thirty.

5. *Those whose secretion was poor in quality or quantity.*—In these cases the baby had supplemental feeding, suitable to the size and digestive powers. To this class belong twenty elderly primiparæ and twenty-seven primiparæ between the ages of twenty and thirty. Babies on supplemental feeds did apparently badly on the whole, *i.e.*, the weight curve was poor; of the twenty cases in which the mother was an elderly primipara, only four regained their birth weight on the tenth day, in the other twenty-seven cases only one baby regained its birth weight on the tenth day. This poor result was in some cases due to the use of Holt's formulæ. These aim at training the digestive powers of the baby slowly; the percentages of fat and protein are low. Several had slight enteritis. In scanning the weights of the babies at birth, the number of babies exceeding 7 lb. is striking (twenty-two out of thirty-nine). Ten of them weighed over 8 lb., the heaviest weighed 9 lb. ½ oz., the smallest weighed 4 lb. 9½ oz. This was a full term baby, but very immature. There was no other baby under 5 lb.

6. *Those who were unable to nurse the baby, owing to the absence of secretion.*—To this class belong four elderly primiparæ. In two of the cases the mother was over forty; the others were aged respectively thirty-one and thirty. It is perhaps interesting to note the results of breast feeding in women over forty :

Age.	Feeding.	Result.	Weight at Birth.	Weight 10th Day.
40	Breast	Good weight curve.	129½ oz.	133 oz.
42	Breast	Regained birth weight 7th day, fair curve.	94 oz.	97 oz.
40	Supple-mented.	Initial loss 7 oz, poor curve.	93 oz.	91½ oz.
41	Breast	Regained birth weight 5th day, steady gain.	107 oz.	113 oz.

Summary.

	Elderly Primiparæ.	Primiparæ between the ages of 20 and 30.
Class 1.—Excellent ..	25	34
Class 2.—Good ..	29	11
Class 3.—Excessive ..	5	9
Class 4.—Poor ..	17	27
Class 5.—Supplemented	20	19
Class 6.—No secretion ..	4	—
	100	100

At first sight, it appears that the younger woman is a better nursing mother than the so-called elderly. Although it is fallacious to argue from such a small number of statistics, it certainly does appear that there is a comparatively high percentage of the latter class who are totally unable to feed their babies (4 per cent.), but otherwise, if women in classes 1, 2, and 3 are grouped together as efficient nurses, the elderly primiparæ do not come far below the standard of the younger primiparæ; and if women in classes 4, 5, and 6 are grouped together as "bad nurses," the figures tell against the younger women. Many of these latter were unmarried women, more or less distressed and anxious at the responsibility and shame of their condition. As breast feeding is so largely influenced by the nervous condition of the mother, this may account for many of them being indifferent nurses. It is surprising to find that only 56 per cent. of the primiparæ were good nursing mothers, but it must be remembered that many of the women had been ill-fed during pregnancy and were drawn from the lower strata of the working classes.

Taken as a whole, this study of breast feeding in primiparæ shows that the elderly primipara is as good a nursing mother as a primipara between twenty and thirty, but that in a small percentage of cases she is unable to breast-feed her baby owing to lack of secretion.

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RURAL MIDWIVES IN IRELAND.

An Irish nurse suggests that midwives in that country should be constituted into a service under the State, paid an adequate living wage, and properly inspected. At present, for the most part, under the Poor Law they only receive from £20 to £30 *per annum*, in many cases without lodging or allowances.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)