

EARLY LANGUAGE DELAY AND PREDICTIVE FACTORS IN CHILDREN AGED 2 YEARS *

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***Objective:** To investigate the predictive factors for early language delay (ELD) at age 2 years based on the Prospective Cohort Study of Thai children (PCTC).*

***Study design:** A prospective cohort study: secondary data retrieving.*

***Subjects:** Three thousand nine hundred five children were recruited from four communities and one hospital in five areas of Thailand.*

***Material and Method:** The Language Development Survey (LDS) was performed to identify children with early language delay (ELD) at age 2 years. Logistic regression analysis was used to investigate the association between possible factors (both biological and environment factors) and ELD.*

***Main outcome measure:** Number of children with ELD at age of 2 years.*

***Results:** The incidence of ELD at age 2 years was 11.68%. Risk factors for ELD were birth weight (Odds Ratio: OR = 2.38, 95% Confidence interval: CI 1.65-3.42), male gender (OR = 2.12, 95% Confidence interval: CI 1.67-2.69), 3rd-4th and 5th child born or more (OR = 1.42, 95% CI = 1.02-1.96; OR = 1.88, 95% CI = 1.08-3.27, respectively), birth weight < 2,500 grams (OR = 2.38, 95% CI = 1.65-3.42), no first word within 1 year (OR = 2.25, 95% CI = 1.79-2.84), no walking within 1 year (OR = 1.34, 95% CI = 1.05-1.72), and maternal occupation (laborer or none) (OR = 1.36, 95% CI = 1.01-1.82). District living was a protective factor for ELD (OR = 0.42, 95% CI = 0.32- 0.54). There was no clear evidence for a link between breastfeeding and ELD.*

***Conclusion:** Significant factors identified here raise strong concerns that should be addressed clinically when counseling families and planning treatment. Further study using a longer longitudinal design and more detailed information is recommended to better determine predictive factors for ELD or specific language impairment (SLI).*