

A Study to Assess the Level of Knowledge on Breast Feeding among Primi Para Mothers in Selected Hospitals, Puducherry

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Abstract

“Breast feeding within one hour saves one million lives”. Breastfeeding is the “Gold standard” for infant feeding. Breast feeding is the most effective way to protect a baby from many acute and chronic diseases. It helps to decrease the infant mortality rate and prevents malnutrition.

Objectives:

- To assess the level of knowledge on breast feeding among primi para mothers.
- To associate the level of knowledge on breast feeding with the selected demographic variables of the primi para mothers.

Materials and Methods: This descriptive study was conducted in 100 primi para mothers in selected hospitals, Puducherry. The subjects were selected based on convenient sampling technique. The self structured questionnaires were distributed to the selected postnatal mothers to assess their knowledge on breast feeding.

Result: Among 100 subjects, mothers who are < 25 years of age is marginally higher than the mothers with > 25 years of age. The knowledge score of the mothers from nuclear family (10.39) is marginally higher than the mothers from joint family (9.64). The knowledge of mothers from urban area is 11.25 against 9.65 for the mothers from rural areas. The knowledge score in mothers who got married outside the family (10.31) is also marginally higher. The knowledge in relation to educational status shows that the knowledge of breast feeding among mothers increase with the increase in educational status. The knowledge of mothers in relation to the antenatal visits shows that the mothers who had made antenatal visits and who didn't have any antenatal visits are comparable ($p > 0.05$). There was no significant association on the level of knowledge regarding breast feeding with the selected demographic variables among the primipara mothers. All the subjects were given health education regarding breast feeding after the completion of the questionnaire session.

Conclusion: This study shows that the majority of postnatal mothers in selected hospitals have inadequate knowledge on breast feeding. It is essential to educate women during their antenatal period regarding the importance of breast feeding.

Keywords: Knowledge; Breast Feeding; Primi Para

Introduction

Breastfeeding is the “Gold standard” for infant feeding [1]. Breast milk is an ideal food for neonates. It is the best gift that a mother can give to her baby. Exclusive breastfeeding has a potential to reduce under-5 mortality rate by 13%. It should be initiated within half an hour of birth [2]. Extensive research confirms the nutritional, economic, biomedical, immunological, and psychological advantages of breast milk. Considering the extensive benefits of breastfeeding, the World Health Organization and the American Dietetic Association recommend exclusive breastfeeding of infants for the first six months and continued breastfeeding with complementary foods up to 12 months of age [3]. Breast feeding not only improves bonding and cognitive development, but also protects against diarrhoea, respiratory and other illness [4]. Breastfeeding soon after birth helps uterine involution, reducing chances of postpartum hemorrhage. It provides protection against pregnancy due to lactational amenorrhoea. Breastfeeding is most convenient and time saving. It reduces the risk of cancer of breast and ovary. Breastfeeding is the most effective way of shedding extra weight that mother has gained during pregnancy [2]. Though the significance of breast feeding is insisted for the antenatal mothers during each antenatal visit it is not practiced effectively and hence the investigators undertaken the present study.

Methodology

The data was collected for a period of one week. Quantitative research approach was adopted for this study. The research design selected for this study was descriptive design. Convenient sampling, a non-probability sampling technique was used to select the sample. Primi para mothers admitted in selected hospitals were the target population. The sample size was 100 as per inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria are primi para mothers, willing to participate in the study and who can understand and speak Tamil. The Exclusion criteria are primi para mothers with HIV positive, who are having intra uterine death and still birth and who are mentally ill. An informed consent was obtained from the mothers by explaining the study the objectives of the study and confidentiality was assured. The self-structured questionnaire has been developed in the local language (Tamil). It consists of two sections. Section-I consists of selected demographic variables such as age, education, occupation, type of marriage, type of family, domicile, religion, antenatal visits. Section-II consists of 20 multiple choice questions about the knowledge of breast feeding among primi para mothers. The total score is 20. Each question has 4 options with the correct answer. Each correct answer has given a score of one and the wrong answer zero score. The data obtained was planned to be analyzed based on the objectives of the study using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results and Findings

The distribution of demographic variables reveals that 3% of mothers were in the age group of < 20 years; 79% of mothers were in the age group of 20 - 25 years; 18% of mothers were in the age group of 26 - 30 years. 64% of mothers belong to joint family and 36% of mothers belong to nuclear family. Most of the mothers 84% were hailing from rural area and 16% were hailing from urban area. 13% of mothers were illiterate; 51% of them have studied upto primary school; 27% completed their secondary education and 7% were graduates. 38% of mothers had consanguineous marriage and 62% of mothers had non consanguineous marriage. 22% of mothers were working and 78% of mothers were not working. Majority of the mothers 85% were booked and 15% were unbooked. There was no significant association on the level of knowledge regarding breast feeding with the selected demographic variables among the primipara mothers (Table 1).

In this study the results showed that 54% of mothers had inadequate knowledge whereas 43% of mothers had moderately adequate knowledge and only 3% of mothers had adequate knowledge about breast feeding. All the subjects were given health education regarding breast feeding after the completion of the questionnaire session (Table 2).

S.no	Demographic variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD	P value
1	Age					
	< 20 years	3	3%	12.67	1.15	0.051
	20 - 25	79	79%	10.09	3.06	
	26 - 30	18	18%	8.67	2.54	
> 30	-	-	9.91	3.01		
2	Type of family					
	Joint	64	64%	9.64	2.96	0.240
Nuclear	36	36%	10.39	3.06		
3	Domicile					
	Rural	84	84%	9.65	2.92	0.051
Urban	16	16%	11.25	3.19		
4	Educational status					
	Illiterate	13	13%	8.85	2.19	0.102
	Primary	51	51%	9.64	2.81	
	Secondary	27	27%	10.41	3.55	
Graduate	7	7%	12.0	3.55		
5	Type of marriage					
	Consanguineous	38	38%	9.26	2.69	0.09
Non-Consanguineous	62	62%	10.31	3.13		
6	Occupation					
	Working	22	22%	9.45	3.08	0.424
Not working	78	78%	10.04	2.99		
7	Antenatal visits					
	Booked	85	85%	9.96	3.06	0.667
Unbooked	15	15%	9.60	2.8		

Table 1: Distribution of demographic variables with knowledge scores of mothers regarding breast feeding.

S.no	Level of knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
1	Inadequate (0 - 50%)	54	54%
2	Moderately adequate (51 - 75%)	43	43%
3	Adequate (76 - 100%)	3	3%

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of knowledge of mothers regarding breast feeding.

Discussion

In this study the authors assessed the knowledge of primi para mothers regarding breast feeding. The study results were supported by the following authors. Maheswari Ekambaram, Vishnu Bhat B, Mohamed Asif Padiyath Ahamed [5] conducted study on Knowledge, attitude and practice of breastfeeding among postnatal mothers in Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research, Puducherry, India. The data was collected from 100 postnatal mothers by trained interviewers using a structured proforma. The result showed that mothers knowledge in areas of time of initiation of breastfeeding, colostrum feeding, duration of exclusive breastfeeding, knowledge on expressed breast milk and continuation of breastfeeding while baby is sick were 92%, 56%, 38%, 51% respectively. The author suggested that breast feeding should be supported and encouraged at a primary care level and should be given priority to young, less educated and lower socioeconomic class mothers.

Areej Syed., *et al.* [6] conducted study on Knowledge, attitude and practice regarding breastfeeding among mothers in Ajman, UAE. The cross sectional study was conducted among 332 mothers using self-administered questionnaire. Mothers with one child less than 5 years of age and mothers available during the data collection period were the study participants. The results showed that Mothers had adequate knowledge about breast feeding facts and benefits and 60% had positive attitude towards all questions. 46% of mothers exclusively breast fed their babies in their first six months. Women who received Antenatal education during pregnancy did exclusive breast feeding. Low parity showed higher frequency of exclusive breast feeding.

Singh J, Vishakantamurthy DG, Charan PM [7] conducted a cross sectional study on Problems and prospects of Breastfeeding practices among lactating mothers in Mysore between January 2009 to June 2009. Lactating mothers with single infant attending well baby clinic at selected hospitals were the study participants. Questionnaire was used to collect the data. The author concluded that mothers initiated breastfeeding, used pre-lacteal feeds and discarded the colostrum were 74.29%, 50%, 36% respectively. Majority followed hygienic practices during breast feeding. The Author emphasized that breastfeeding intervention programs need to be taught to the mothers during antenatal and postnatal check-ups. Also emphasized the need to address the issues like discarding the colostrum and early/late weaning to the mothers.

Chaudhary RN., *et al.* [8] conducted a hospital based Cross sectional study among 200 mothers regarding Knowledge and practice of breast feeding using pre designed questionnaire. Though the mothers knew that they had to breast feed their babies their knowledge about it was inadequate. The results showed that the mothers who initiated breast feeding within ½ hour of birth, gave prelacteal feed, gave colostrum, practicing exclusive breast feeding, practicing night feeds, practicing feeding one side at a time, practicing inappropriate attachment and positioning were 41.5%, 33%, 95%, 15%, 90%, 15% and 60% respectively. Mothers did not get breast feeding advices during their ANC visits. Mothers had inadequate knowledge regarding breast feeding and there was a big gap between actual and desired practices.

Kishore MS, Kumar P, Aggarwal Ak [9] conducted a community-based study on the level of knowledge and practices regarding breast feeding among 77 mothers in Haryana. They were interviewed using a pretested semi-structured questionnaire. The result showed that 30% of mothers exclusively breast fed their infant till 4 months and 10% till 6 months of age. It was concluded that mother's knowledge regarding breast feeding was suboptimal. Counseling which emphasize on correct technique of breast feeding can improve Exclusive breast feeding rates.

Hong Jiang., *et al.* [10] conducted a study in china regarding breast feeding awareness, intention and needs among first-time mothers. In total, 653 women at 5 - 22 gestational weeks were recruited from four community health centers. The Authors concluded that 40% of the mothers were not aware of the nutritional value, 80% did not know the value of exclusive breast feeding and 98% did not know that they should breast feed for 24 months. Even in late pregnancy and during postpartum mothers were not fully aware of breast feeding

recommendations and breast milk nutritional value. Limited communications with healthcare providers and lack of support for dealing with breastfeeding difficulties were reported.

Freda Intiful, Claudia osei, Rebecca Steele-Dadzie, Ruth Nyarko and Matilda Asante [11] conducted a study in Ghana about the views of 25 first-time expectant mothers on breastfeeding. A qualitative study approach using focus group discussions was used. It was concluded that mothers had intention to breast feed and some mothers were willing to provide formula feeds when there is a need. The mothers had minimal level of knowledge regarding breast feeding issues. About breast feeding issues they obtained knowledge from home (relatives), hospital, and television.

Alexandrina Cardoso, Abel paiva E Silva and Heimar Marin [12] conducted a cross-sectional study on Pregnant women's knowledge gaps about breastfeeding in Northern Portugal. The study was conducted among 621 Portuguese pregnant women using face-to-face interviewing method. The objective was to assess their level of knowledge on breastfeeding and to correlate it with the socio-demographic variables. The results showed that mothers had adequate knowledge about benefits of breastfeeding. Out of 18 knowledge descriptors, in 14 descriptors more than 60% of pregnant mothers showed inadequate knowledge. They lacked knowledge in how to increase lactation and how to deal with breastfeeding complications. The mothers who were oldest, with higher education, and with previous experience on breastfeeding had more knowledge. It was recommended that the focus should emphasize on the younger, the first-time mothers and less educated women.

Conclusion

With the above study result it is concluded that primi para mothers had inadequate knowledge about breast feeding. The mothers should be given adequate health education about breast feeding. For effective health education the nurse should gain knowledge about breast feeding. Thus, the educative role of the nurse could be implemented to improve the knowledge on breast feeding among primi para mothers to decrease the Infant mortality rate.

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