

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Knowledge attitude and practice study for breast feeding in post natal mothers attending pediatric OPD at united medicity

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ABSTRACT

Introduction-Breast milk is the first natural food for the infants. Breast milk is most vital for infant growth and development. Breastfeeding protect mothers in several ways from harmful diseases. It develops a strong bond between mother and infants. Exclusive Breastfeeding is an important practice for the infants growth and development. The purpose of the present study was to study the current status of Breast feeding knowledge and attitude among mothers. **Methods**- It was a cross-sectional study with 190 mothers participated from United Institute of Medical Science, Prayagraj. Subjects detailed demographic profile were noted down. Subjects knowledge and attitude regarding breast feeding was assess on the basis of standardized questionnaire (IIFAS). **Result**- Subjects demographic data represents that most of the mothers were housewives with primary education. Questionnaire based on knowledge and attitudes reports that mothers have good knowledge regarding the breastfeeding but has a neutral attitude towards breast feeding practice. **Conclusion**- In the present study mother's knowledge and attitude regarding breastfeeding was positive, but breastfeeding practice was neutral. It was evident that there is a gap between knowledge and practice on breastfeeding. Thus furthermore schooling regarding importance of breast milk and breastfeeding should be highlighted among women.

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INTRODUCTION

Breastfeeding is an instrumental metaphor for how love works between mother and infants. For the good health infants need proper nourishments, love, attention and care. The ideal food for the young infant is human milk and the tradition of breast feeding babies is over a million years old. "Charaka Samhita" also mentions about the value of breast milk as a source of nutrition for the babies. [1,2]

Breastfeeding is necessary for both the young mother and the developing infants. World Health Organization (WHO), states - "Breastfeeding is the corner stone for an infant's survival, nutrition and development". [3]. Breastfeeding reduces the risk of post-partum haemorrhage, protects mothers against the risk of ovarian and breast cancer and increases the bond between a mother and the child. [4]

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines Exclusive Breast Feeding (EBF) as a situation in

which an infant receives only breast milk from his/her mother for the first 6 months of life and no other solids or liquids with the exception of drops or syrups consisting of vitamins, minerals, supplements, or medicines [5]. Breast-feeding advantages for both mother and baby have been documented and proven beyond doubt by many studies. [6] WHO recommends exclusive breast feeding for first six months of life to achieve optimal growth, development and health. [3]

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend exclusive breastfeeding for first six months of life and advocates continued breastfeeding till at least 12 months of age. After the age of one year it can be continued for as long as the mother and the baby desire. [7] Exclusive breast-feeding provides low cost, complete nutrition for the infant, protects them against infections including infant diarrhea, and prolongs lactation amenorrhea, thereby increasing birth spacing. [8]

Studies globally reveals that only 42 percent of just born infants are breastfed within an hour of birth [9] and only 46percent continue to breastfeed until the age of 2. [10]

In India, the practice of breastfeeding is strongly influenced by social, cultural, traditional practices and economic factors. Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI), formed in 1991, aims to protect, promote and support breastfeeding[11] Government of India under the aegis of National Rural Health Mission, implements Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses(IMNCI). Several studies have shown that urbanization has been inversely linked to prevalence of breast feeding. Early initiation of breastfeeding shows a declining trend and is not seen in over 75% of the nation's children and over 50% of children have not been exclusively breastfed. But the practice of pre lacteal feeding continues to be present in significant proportion in both urban and rural populations.[12]

The knowledge and attitude towards exclusive breastfeed ing is influenced by the number of factors like family pressures, literacy level of mother, socio-cultural traditions, maternal age, family income, social class. Most of the children who are not exclusively breastfed consume water, milk, formula, or complementary food in addition to breast milk, often leading to infections. [13]

Breast-feeding has decline worldwide in recent years as a result of urbanization, socio-economic, changes in lifestyle, advertisements, marketing of infant milk formulae and maternal employment outside the home.[14] Each year in the first week of August, National Breastfeeding week is celebrated to support and promote the breastfeeding as the best source of nutrition for a baby. [15]

Thus, the present study was aimed to examine the infant feeding practices, knowledge and attitude towards breast feeding among Indian postnatal mother's using the IIFAS.

METHODS

The present study was carried out in Department of Pediatrics and Gynecology, United Institute of Medical Sciences, Prayagraj Uttar Pradesh. It was an observation cross-sectional study. A total of 190 mothers were enrolled from April 2023 to June 2023 with their written informed consent. The mothers were enrolled on the basis of the infant's birth age (mothers who had infants between six months to 1 year of age and gestational week from 37 to 42 weeks). Mother's with infants diagnosed with any kind of congenital disorder such as congenital heart disease, genetic disorder (Down syndrome) etc and unwilling to participate were excluded from the study.

Ethical Consideration

For human participants enrolment, approval was taken from Institutional Ethics Committee, United Institute of Medical Science, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.

Data Collection

Data collection was carried out from them others attending the OPD after explaining them the whole purpose, risk and benefits of the study. Data was collected through face-to-face interview in their preferred language (Hindi) that approximately took 15-20mins each. After the data collection, subjects were also been educated about the importance of breast feeding.

Demographic Data Collection tool

The demographic history includes age, habit, religion of mother, type of family, mother's education, occupation, food habit, income and current breastfeeding practices. The obstetrics history includes gravida, birth - age of infants, type of delivery etc.

Questionnaire Data Collection tool

A structured questionnaire was prepared to assess the knowledge, attitude towards the breastfeeding among postnatal mothers.

- Section-A consisted of 15 questions related to mothers' knowledge about Breastfeeding with two possible answers, "True or False". The possible scores ranged from 0 to 15.
- Section-B was a semi-structured questionnaire that included questions related to practices and preferences of mothers about breastfeeding.
- Section-C was a standardized attitude questionnaire (The Iowa infant feeding attitude scale-IIFAS) form others towards breastfeeding, a validated and reliable tool. It is a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to agree strongly).

Validity and Reliability of the Data tools

The data tools used in the study was validated through subject's experts in midwifery and from the Department of Pediatrics and Obstetrics. There were 90% agreement from the experts. Reliability of the tools were obtained by the test-retest method. The IIFAS is a standardized scoring tools to assess the attitude, knowledge, practice of breastfeeding.

Statistical analysis

Data were organized and interpreted using Microsoft Excel Sheet.

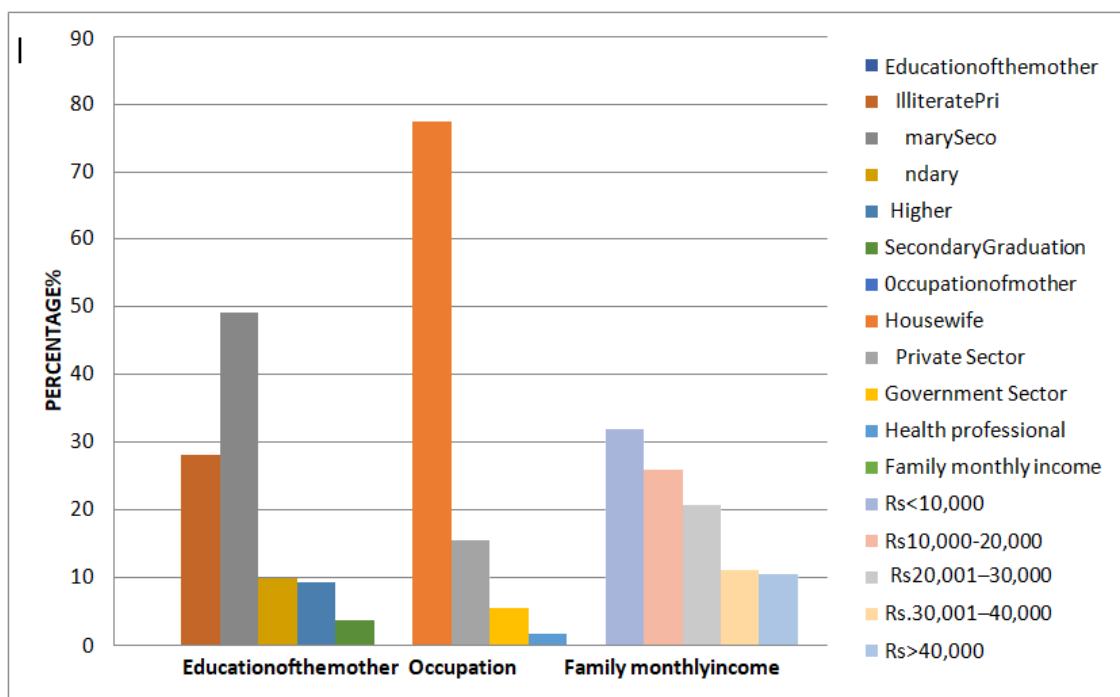
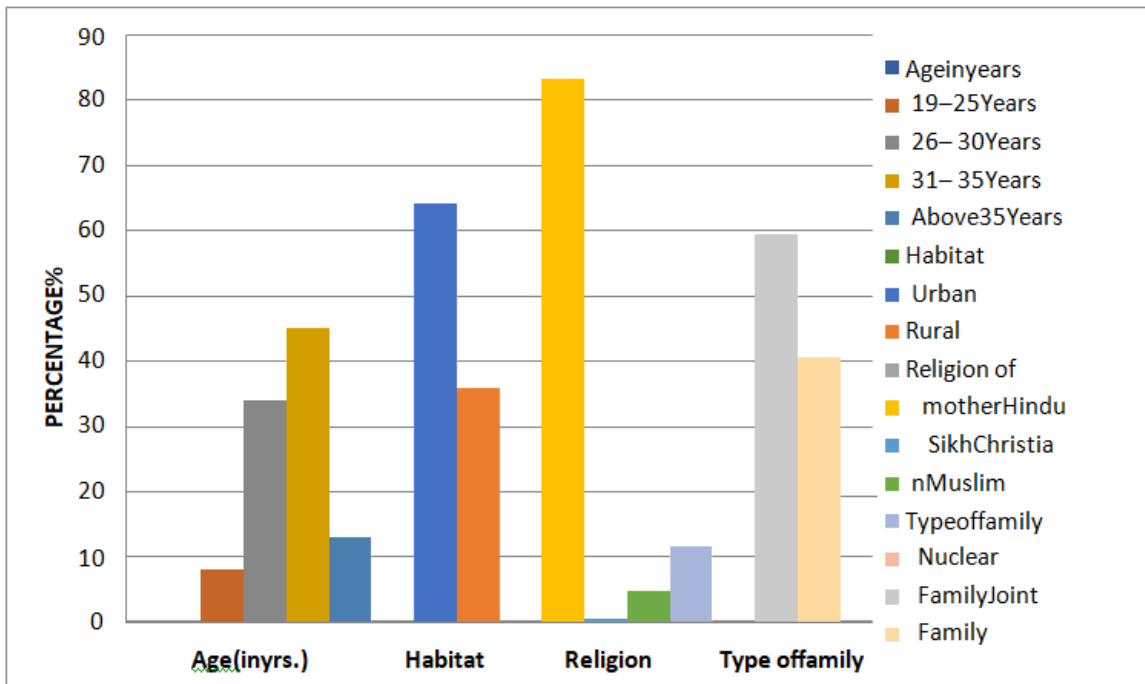
RESULTS

Figure 1, 2 and 3 represents the socio-demographic profile of breastfeeding among mothers. Most of the mothers were in age of 31 to 35 year, belonging to urban habitat. Maximum percentage were housewives and had primary education.

Table no 1: Represents the knowledge of mothers on breast feeding. 82% agreed that colostrums is important in maintaining the immunity of infants. 89.3% agreed that Exclusive breastfeeding is required for first 6 month.

Table no 2: Represents the attitude of mothers on breastfeeding. 35.5% mothers agreed that formula milk feeding is more convenient than breastfeeding.

74.2% mothers agreed that breastfeeding increases mothers and infants bonding. 34.7% agreed that formula-feeding is the better choice if the mother plans to go back to work.



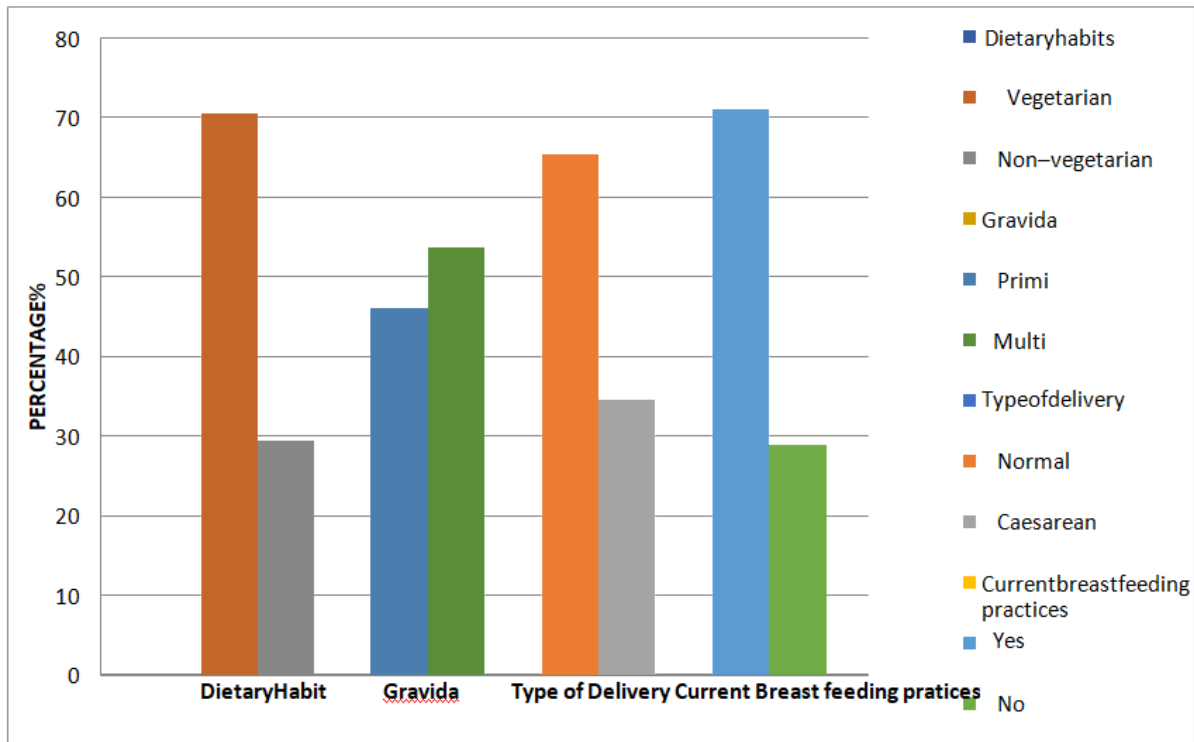


TABLE NO-1: KNOWLEDGE OF MOTHERS ON EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING

S.no.	Statement	True	False
1	Colostrum is first breastmilk	90	10
2	Colostrum is important for the baby to maintain immunity	82.5	17.5
3	Burping should be done after each feed	92.7	7.3
4	Breastfeeding should be continued upto 2years	67.1	32.9
5	Exclusive breastmilk can be given during the first six months	89.3	10.7
6	Lactating mother should take healthy food to improve secretion of milk	97.6	2.4
7	During breastfeeding, the mother should sit comfortably	100	-
8	During breastfeeding, them other should maintain eye to eye Contact & talk with the baby	84.8	84.8
9	Wash each breast with warm water before breastfeeding	76.4	76.4
10	Awakening the baby while breastfeeding	61.9	61.9
11	Breastfeeding helps in mother and child bonding	95.4	95.4
12	Breastfeeding can prevent diseases affecting breast	96.1	96.1
13	Breastfeed affect the beauty of feeding mothers	41.6	41.6
14	The mother should not feed the child when she has diarrhea	41.9	41.9
15	Stop breast feeding when you start weaning	54.5	54.5

TABLENO-3:MOTHERS'ATTITUDESTOWARDS BREASTFEEDI2NG

S.no	Statements	Agree(%)	Neutral(%)	Disagree(%)
1.	The benefits of breast milk last only aslong as the baby is breastfed*	(83.1)	(8.9)	(8.1)
2.	Formula feeding is more convenient than breastfeeding	(35.5)	(28.2)	(36.3)
3.	Breast feeding increases mother- infant bonding	(74.2)	(21.8)	(4.0)
4.	Breast milk is lacking in iron*	(30.6)	(50.8)	(18.5)
5.	Formula-fed babies are more likely to be over fed than breast fed babies	(46.0)	(31.5)	(22.6)
6.	Formula feeding is the better choice if the mother plans to go back towork*	(34.7)	(34.7)	(30.6)
7.	Motherswho formula feedmiss one of the great joys of motherhood	(52.4)	(39.5)	(8.1)

8.	Women should not breastfeed in public places such as restaurants	(42.7)	(29.0)	(28.2)
9.	Breastfed babies are healthier than formula-fed babies	(71.0)	(17.7)	(11.3)
10.	Fathers feel left out if a mother breastfeeds*	(38.7)	(41.1)	(20.2)
11.	Breast milk is the ideal food for babies	(67.7)	(21.0)	(11.3)
12.	Breast milk is more easily digested than formula	(74.2)	(15.3)	(10.5)
13.	The formula is as healthy for an infant as breast milk*	(25.0)	(35.5)	(39.5)
14.	Breast feeding is more convenient than formula	(9.4)	(20.2)	(10.5)
15.	Breast milk is cheaper than formula	(75.0)	(21.0)	(4.0)
16.	A mother who occasionally drinks alcohol should not breast feed her baby*	(54.8)	(33.9)	(11.3)

DISCUSSION

Breastfeeding is an essential practice in caring for newborn babies immediately after birth, which eventually has a vital role in reducing infant mortality and morbidity. In developing countries like India, where health care facilities are inadequate, developing and implementing effective breast feeding practices would be easier to change the attitude of the mother and families.[16]

In the present study, even though 80% of mothers had a primary educational status and were housewives. It is evident that the higher the level of education of an nursing mother the higher, the chances of her breast feeding her child for a longer duration

[17]. Several studies conducted within Ghana have reported that mothers' level of education is a major determinant to the practice of exclusive breastfeeding [18, 19, 20]. It is noted that women with secondary and tertiary education are more likely to be educated on breastfeeding, they are aware of its benefits to both babies and mothers, hence they are well motivated to breastfeed.

Colostrum is the yellowish, sticky milk called colostrum produced during the latter part of pregnancy through to delivery and essential for newborn babies to maintain immunity. Colostrum is very definite in volume, appearance and composition, it contains an elevated level of immunologic components like secretory immunoglobulin A (IgA), lactoferrin, leukocytes and epidermal growth factor for development. [21,22,23]

In the present study, 82.5% of mothers agree that colostrum is vital for the baby to maintain immunity. Colostrum was given to 60.7% babies which is less than that reported by studies done in Madhya Pradesh (82%) and Varanasi (90%). [24,25] A study by (Bala et al) reported that around 94.5% mothers agree that colostrum is the first breast milk and 99.4% agree that colostrum maintains the immunity of the baby. [13]

In the present study around 90% of mothers know that exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months is essential for the baby growth and development. Most of the mothers knew about the advantages of breastfeeding. They were also aware of enhanced mother baby bonding and its related impact like reduced stranger anxiety etc. Around 96% of mothers knew that breastfeeding could prevent

diseases affecting breast. A similar study in Abu Dhabi with 344 participants also reported that 81.2% of mothers were knowing the importance of EBF. [26] The study was in concurrence with (Vinay BS et al., Bala, et al) study, who found that 69.5%, 95.5% respectively of mothers were liking to give exclusive feeding till 6 months of age. [27,13].

(Mehdi & Mahanta et al) in their study on breastfeeding and weaning practices reported 100% breast feeding rate was maintained throughout 0 to 12 months. Exclusive breast-feeding rate was 69.35% upto 6 months of age. [28]

Weaning is a gradual process of starting supplementary feeds from 6 months of age while continuing breast feeding for providing enough energy, protein and other nutrients to grow normally. [29]. In the present study 41.9% of mothers agreed that mothers should not feed the child when she has diarrhea, and near half of the mothers agree with the statement that they stop breastfeeding when they start weaning. (Bala et al) also reported that around 80.3% mothers agreed the same and stop breast feeding when they start weaning. [13] Similarly, 69% of women agreed that they stop breastfeeding when they start weaning and 44% mother agreed that they do not feed the child when their have diarrhea. [30]

In the present study, the mothers' knowledge was good considering the maximum of mothers were housewives (77.4) and (49.3%) of the mothers were primary educated.

The attitude was assessed by an internationally standardized scale, the Iowa Infant Feeding Attitude Scale (IIFAS). In the present study nearly three-fourths of the postnatal mothers have a positive attitude that breastfed babies are healthier than formula-fed babies, and breastfeeding improves mother-infant bonding. Many mothers had a positive attitude that breast milk is the ideal food for infants. The majority of the participants agreed that breastfeeding is more convenient than formula feeding (83.6%) and increases mother-infant bonding (73.8%), [30]. A study reported by (Bala et al) reported that 82.5% mothers agree that breast milk is more digestible than formula fed. [13]. Another study reported that 96.1% women agree that breast milk is superior than formula-milk in fulfilling the nutritional requirement of infants and 94% confirms that it is beneficial for both mothers and infants. [26]

Furthermore, the present study reported that 25% of mothers agree with the statement that the formula-milk is as healthy for an infant as breast milk, 34% of mothers agree that formula feeding is the better choice if the mother plans to go back to work, and 35% of mothers agree that formula feeding is more convenient than breastfeeding. The finding was in accordance with another study that reported that 9.8% of women agree that formula-feeding is more convenient than breastfeeding and 36.9% of women agreed that it's a better choice if the mother plans to resume her work outside the home again. [30]. A study reported that 26.9% of women agreed the same that formula-feeding is more convenient than breastfeeding. [13] Moreover, in the present study 35% of mothers agreed that breast milk is lacking in iron, 42% of mothers agreed that women should not breastfeed in public places such as restaurants and 54% of mothers agreed that mothers who occasionally drink alcohol should not breastfeed their infants. (Poreddi Vijayalakshmi et al.) has reported 19.7% of women agreed that breastfeeding in public should be avoided and 50.8% agreed that women who occasionally drink alcohol should not breastfeed. [30]

Overall, the study shows that postnatal mother's practices and preferences towards breastfeeding is changing with time, which is helping in improving immunity and maintaining the good health of a newborn. Many mothers were aware of the importance of breastfeeding and had a positive attitude towards breastfeeding, but there are several aspects of breastfeeding which are still needed to highlight in details among mothers of newborn.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent from the current study that the participants have good breastfeeding knowledge and attitudes, but their breastfeeding practices have a neutral response and do not correspond to their acquired knowledge, highlighting the need and importance to provide prenatal education and counseling to mothers on breastfeeding. Furthermore, focus should be given on educating young girls regarding breastfeeding, its need for the growth and development of infants, Exclusive breastfeeding, effects of formula – feeding etc. that would further magnify good health of newborn leading to a healthier society.

RECOMMENDATION

Primary healthcare practitioner, nurses and other healthcare professionals should counsel and educate the mothers during antenatal and postnatal phase, as well as their family members to support breastfeeding the child as it is important for their good health. It is also recommended to strengthen the public health education campaigns to promote breastfeeding.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Present study findings are based on the self-reported by the study participants based on their recall ability,

which may give rise to recall bias, small sample size that made difficult to generalize the findings.

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