

# Assessment of Breast Feeding Practices and Problems among Known Population of Postnatal Mothers: An Hospital Based Study

Kheta Ram Soni<sup>1</sup>, Sawai Khatri<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Senior Resident, Dept. of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Government Medical College, Barmer, Rajasthan, India.

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Breastfeeding is a basic human activity, vital to infant and maternal health and of immense economic value to households and societies. Exclusive Breast Feeding (EBF) is defined as infant feeding with human milk without the addition of any other liquids or solids. Hence; we planned the present study to assess of breast feeding practices and problems among known population of postnatal mothers.

**Materials & Methods:** A total of 100 subjects were enrolled in the present study. The entire study was carried out in 2 months duration. After meeting the inclusion and exclusion criteria, detail demographic, clinical and past medical data of all the subjects was obtained. A self-framed questionnaire was given to all the subjects for obtaining details of breastfeeding habits. All the results were recorded in Microsoft excel sheet and were analyzed by SPSS software.

**Results:** In 40 percent of the cases, patients were given exclusive breast feeding. In 60 percent of the cases, breastfeeding was given on demand. Lactation failure, maternal illness and failure to thrive were the most common reasons for early weaning.

**Conclusion:** Breastfeeding is worldwide accepted to be a healthiest food for infants. There is still paucity of data in the literature in relation to the literacy status of mothers on breastfeeding practices.

**Keywords:** Breast Feeding, Postnatal, Practices.

## \*Correspondence to:

**Dr. Sawai Khatri,**  
Senior Resident,  
Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology,  
Government Medical College, Barmer, Rajasthan, India.

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## INTRODUCTION

Breastfeeding is a basic human activity, vital to infant and maternal health and of immense economic value to households and societies. Exclusive Breast Feeding (EBF) is defined as infant feeding with human milk without the addition of any other liquids or solids.<sup>1-3</sup> The benefits of breast-feeding, to both mother and baby, have long been recognized. Despite strong evidences in support of EBF for the first six months of life, its prevalence has remained low worldwide and it is estimated that only about one-third of infants were exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life.<sup>4,5</sup> Experience and scientific evidence show that improvement in child health are not necessarily dependent on the use of sophisticated and expensive technologies but rather on effective strategies that are based on an holistic approach.<sup>6</sup> Hence; under the light of above mentioned data, we planned the present study to assess of breast feeding practices and problems among known population of postnatal mothers.

## MATERIALS & METHODS

The present study was conducted in the department Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Government Medical College, Barmer, Rajasthan,

India. It included assessment of assessment of breast feeding practices and problems among known population of postnatal mothers. Ethical approval was obtained from the ethical committee of the institution and written consent was obtained from all the patients after explaining in detail the entire research protocol. A total of 100 subjects were enrolled in the present study. The entire study was carried out in 2 months duration.

## Inclusion Criteria

- Postnatal mothers of less than one year of duration

## Exclusion Criteria

- Subjects with presence of any form of malignant neoplasm,
- Diabetic and hypertensive subjects,
- Subjects with positive history of any form of psychiatric illness

After meeting the inclusion and exclusion criteria, detail demographic, clinical and past medical data of all the subjects was obtained. A self-framed questionnaire was given to all the subjects for obtaining details of breastfeeding habits. All the results were recorded in Microsoft excel sheet and were analyzed by SPSS software.

**RESULTS**

In the present study, a total of 100 subjects were analyzed. 69 percent of the patients belonged to the age group of 20 to 30 years. Mean age of the patients of the present study was 28.5 years. Mean weight of the students of the present study was 65.8 Kg. In 40 percent of the cases, patients were given exclusive breast feeding. In 60 percent of the cases, breastfeeding was given on demand. Lactation failure, maternal illness and failure to thrive were the most common reasons for early weaning.

**Table 1: Demographic parameter**

Parameter	n	
Age group (years)	Less than 20	12
	20 to 30	69
	More than 30	19
Mean Weight (Kg)	65.8	

**Table 2: Exclusiveness of breastfeeding**

Exclusiveness of breastfeeding	n
Yes	40
No	60

**Table 3: Type of feeding**

Type of feeding	n
On demand	60
Scheduled	40

**Table 4: Time of initiation of weaning**

Time (in months)	n
Less than 5	3
5	7
6	70
12	20

**Table 5: Reasons for early weaning**

Reasons	%
Lactation failure	50
Maternal illness	10
Failure to thrive	40

**DISCUSSION**

Breastfeeding protects infants against diarrhea and respiratory tract infections. These effects may be decreased due to supplementation with water-based fluids or formula (2-4). In addition, the early supplementation may decrease milk production due to less frequent breastfeeding. As a result, breastfeeding difficulties may develop, which is contributed to reduced maternal breastfeeding confidence. The benefits of breastfeeding increased when the baby was fed with breast milk exclusively.<sup>7,8</sup>

In the present study, a total of 100 subjects were analyzed. 69 percent of the patients belonged to the age group of 20 to 30 years. Mean age of the patients of the present study was 28.5 years. Mean weight of the students of the present study was 65.8

Kg. In 40 percent of the cases, patients were given exclusive breast feeding. Kishore KSS et al studied the breastfeeding practices, knowledge regarding usefulness of breastfeeding and factors influencing the breastfeeding practices. In six villages of Panchkula district of Haryana, all the mothers of infants between 0–6 months were interviewed using a pretested semi-structured questionnaire. Time at initiation of breastfeeding, duration of EBF and their understanding about the usefulness of breastfeeding were assessed. Position of the baby during breastfeeding and attachment of the baby's mouth to the breast were assessed by direct observation while feeding. Breastfeeding knowledge of the mother was evaluated. Out of the 77 mothers, 30% and 10% exclusively breastfed their infants till 4 and 6 months of age, respectively. There was 'good attachment' in 42% mother–infant pairs and infants were held in 'correct position' by 60% mothers. Thirty-nine percent of the mothers had 'satisfactory' breastfeeding knowledge. On multivariate logistic regression analysis, lack of breastfeeding counseling was significantly associated with decreased rates of EBF at 4 months and 6 months (p-value 0.01 and 0.002, respectively) and 'full' breastfeeding (FBF) at 6 months of age (p-value 0.002). EBF/FBF practices and breastfeeding knowledge are suboptimal among the rural North Indian mothers.<sup>9</sup> In the present study, in 60 percent of the cases, breastfeeding was given on demand. Lactation failure, maternal illness and failure to thrive were the most common reasons for early weaning. Mise PJ et al assessed the breastfeeding practices and problems among postnatal mothers. 112 mothers having infants of age group less than 1 year were included in the study. Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect information on breastfeeding practices in the initial six months of birth of the child. 112 lactating mothers were included in the study. Majority of subjects 86 (76.7%) were in the age group 21- 30 years. About 43 (38.4%) lactating mother initiated breast feeding practices within 1 hour after the delivery. 63.4% of the infants received exclusive breast feeding. Lactation failure 40% and unsatisfactory growth of baby 50% were the main reasons for early weaning. Most common cause of delay in initiation in breast were caesarian section and delivery complication (53.12% and 21.88% respectively) Only 27 (24.1%) babies were given pre-lacteal feed. There is a need of giving information regarding breast feeding during antenatal visits to inform the mothers regarding proven facts of advantages of exclusive breastfeeding, as undesirable cultural practices such as giving pre-lacteals, late initiation of breast feeding are still prevalent among the community and these should be discouraged.<sup>10</sup>

**CONCLUSION**

Under the light of above obtained data, the authors conclude that breastfeeding is worldwide accepted to be a healthiest food for infants. There is still paucity of data in the literature in relation to the literacy status of mothers on breastfeeding practices. Therefore; further studies are recommended.

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