



BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS OF POSTNATAL MOTHERS AND FEEDING DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THEM.

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ABSTRACT

Breastfeeding within the first hour of life provides protection against infections. There are many challenges to initiate and continue breastfeeding during neonatal period.

Objectives: To assess breastfeeding awareness and its practice after delivery by postnatal mothers. To identify feeding difficulties encountered by postnatal mothers during breastfeeding.

Methodology: A cross-sectional observational study was carried out among postnatal mothers Health care professionals (doctors and nurses) were poor knowledge providers to the postnatal mothers.

Results: In our study, 64% mothers initiated breastfeeding within one hour. Most common feeding difficulty observed was pain in breast.

Conclusion: Only 2/3rd of postnatal mothers initiated breastfeeding within one hour. The most important opportunities for promoting breastfeeding are during ANC checkup, delivery room and just after birth. Hence initiation of breastfeeding within one hour and health education should be encouraged through various health programs.

KEYWORDS : Breastfeeding, Knowledge, Postnatal mothers, Feeding difficulties.

INTRODUCTION:

Breast milk is the first natural food that contains all the energy and nutrients.[1] WHO recommends that infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life to achieve optimal growth, development, and health.[2] Breastfeeding is the ideal method suited for physiological and psychological needs of an infant.[3,4] Breastfeeding within the first hour of life provides protection against infections and helps to prevent neonatal death due to sepsis, pneumonia, diarrhoea and hypothermia.[5] It is the first natural food that contains all the energy and nutrients required for newborn infants and is best choice for feeding.[6] Breastfeeding to the baby within one hour of birth is said to significantly increase their chances of survival as breast milk contains vital nutrients and antibodies that increase the immunity of the baby.

According to NFHS-1 data; 9.5% mothers initiated breastfeeding within one hour.[7] This was improved to 15.8% by NFHS-2 data.[8] NFHS-3 data revealed; 24.5% mothers started breastfeeding within an hour.[9] As per latest data by NFHS-4, more improvement was seen in this aspect and the same was increased from 24.5% to only 41.6%.[10]

Improper practices and awareness towards breastfeeding have been identified as major reason for poor health outcomes in developing nations. There are many challenges to begin and continue breastfeeding during neonatal period extending into infancy. Following many awareness programs many inappropriate breastfeeding practices are still being observed. With all these factors in the background, the present study was carried out with the aim of assessing the correct knowledge and attitude towards breastfeeding practices and the identification of feeding difficulties among postnatal mothers.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess breastfeeding awareness and its practice after delivery by postnatal mothers.
2. To identify feeding difficulties encountered by postnatal mothers during breastfeeding.

METHODOLOGY:

This was cross-sectional observational study carried out in postnatal ward among postnatal mothers who delivered normal newborn in the tertiary care hospital. Ethical clearance was obtained from institutional ethical committee. Consecutive sampling method used. A structured questionnaire was developed by the paediatricians based on previous review of literatures. Written informed consent was obtained from the participants. Face to face interviews were conducted by the researchers in their local language.

Inclusion criteria:

All postnatal mothers who delivered normal newborn within study period.

Exclusion criteria:

Mothers whose baby required NICU admission.

Babies born with congenital anomalies like cleft lip and palate.

Total 594 postnatal mothers between surveyed between the period from November 2019 to January 2020. The data was collected using structured questionnaires included general profile, education, parity, basic knowledge and awareness about breastfeeding and difficulties they encountered during breastfeeding. In addition to questionnaire postnatal mothers were observed by health care personals for correct feeding practices during breastfeeding and to identify feeding difficulties while feeding.

Statistical Analysis:

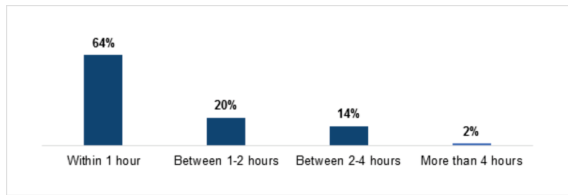
Entire data collected and entered in MS Excel sheet. All the results were shown in tabular or graphical format expressed as numbers in percentage. The Entire data was analysed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20.2 for MS windows.

RESULTS:

Total 594 postnatal mothers were included in this study. 73%

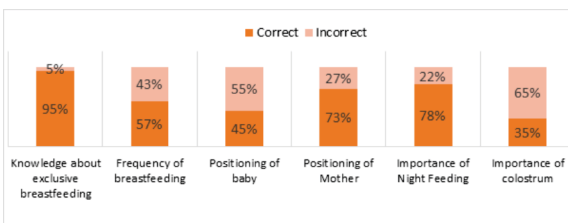
mothers were delivered vaginally and 27% delivered by caesarean sections. Out of 594, 42% were primi and 58% were multipara. Out of 594 postnatal mothers, 380 (64%) mothers initiated breastfeeding within 1 hour. 118 (20%) mothers did it between 1-2 hours and 83 (14%) mothers did it between 2-4 hours. 12 (2%) mothers initiated breastfeeding after 4 hours. [Figure 1].

FIGURE 1: INITIATION OF BREASTFEEDING



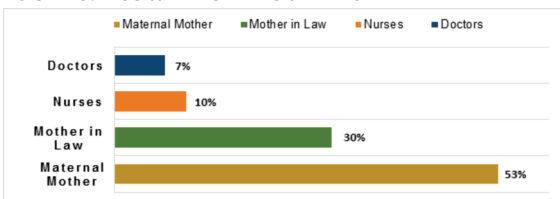
Among these mothers; 95% mothers had knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding, 57% mothers had correct knowledge about frequency of breastfeeding, 45% had correct knowledge about position of baby during feeding. 73% mothers had appropriate knowledge about proper positioning of mother during breastfeeding. About 78% mothers knew the importance of night feeding. Importance of colostrum was known to only 35% mothers. [Figure 2].

FIGURE 2: KNOWLEDGE ABOUT BREASTFEEDING



In our study, mothers reported that their mothers (53%) and mother in laws (30%) were primary knowledge providers. We found only 41 (7%) mothers had doctors as source of knowledge and 59 (10%) mothers had nurses as source of knowledge provider for ideal breastfeeding practices. [Figure 3].

FIGURE 3: KNOWLEDGE PROVIDERS



As per our study, out of 380 mothers who initiated breastfeeding within one hour; 201 mothers (52%) had completed upto their secondary education. [Table 1]

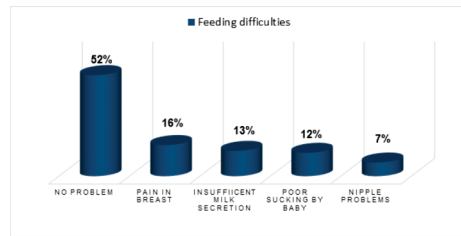
TABLE 1: CORRELATION OF MATERNAL EDUCATION AND INITIATION OF BREASTFEEDING

Maternal education	Mothers initiated Breastfeeding ≤ one hour	Mothers initiated Breastfeeding ≥ one hour
Illiterate	30	77
1 to 5 th std	71	59
6 to 10 th std	130	36
> 10 th std	149	42
Total	n = 380 (64%)	n = 214 (36%)
	N = 594 (100%)	

In this study, 308 (52%) postnatal mothers reported no problems during breastfeeding. 95 (16%) mother reported pain in breast as feeding difficulty. 77 (13%) mothers reported insufficient milk secretion and 71 (12%) mothers said the

newborn had poor sucking. 41 (7%) mothers reported nipple problem. [Figure 4].

FIGURE 4: FEEDING DIFFICULTIES



DISCUSSION:

In our study, only 64% postnatal mothers initiated breastfeeding within one hour. Pratibha G. et al in their study reported that 36.6% initiated breastfeeding within one hour.[11] Abhay B. et al in their study reported this to be 32.5%.[12] Our study showed 57% mothers had knowledge about frequency of breastfeeding, 45% had correct positioning of baby during breastfeeding. Importance of colostrum was known to only 35% mothers. B. Palanivel Rajan in their study; found that 55% mothers had knowledge about frequency of breastfeeding, 46% had correct positioning of baby and 63% knew importance of colostrum.[13] Sandeep M. in their study found that 27.5% knew about importance of colostrum.[14]

Our study showed, 53% mothers and 30% mother-in-law were major source of knowledge providers to postnatal mothers. Only 7% mothers had doctors as knowledge providers and 10% mothers had nurses as source of knowledge. Ambike D. et al in their study found 41% mothers had doctors as a major source of knowledge providers regarding breastfeeding advantages.[15] While Maumita D. et al in their study showed 76% knowledge providers were relatives.[16]

Our study found that, of the mothers who initiated breastfeeding within one hour, 52% mothers had completed upto their secondary education. It indicates that improving maternal education can definitely increase the percentage of initiation of breastfeeding within one hour. Almoth S. et al in their study proved that antenatal education about breastfeeding improved rate of exclusive breastfeeding.[17]

In our study few mothers encountered feeding difficulties during breastfeeding; 16% had pain in breast and 13% had insufficient milk secretion, 12% reported poor sucking by baby and 5% had Nipple problems. Suresh S. in their study found that 25% had breast milk insufficiency and 7.1% had poor sucking.[18]

CONCLUSION:

Only 64% (2/3rd) of postnatal mothers initiated breastfeeding within one hour and about 36% (1/3rd) mothers initiated breastfeeding after one hour. About 65% mothers didn't know the importance of colostrum. Hence the practice of initiation of breastfeeding within one hour along with feeding of colostrum should be encouraged through various health programs. Most common feeding difficulty reported was pain in breast in our study.

Our study reported, health care professionals (Doctors and nurses) were poor sources of knowledge providers to the postnatal mothers. For effective breastfeeding; knowledge amongst mothers was insufficient. The most important opportunities for promoting breastfeeding are during ANC checkup, delivery room and just after birth.

Our study adds further; maternal education is directly proportional to early initiation for feeding. Mothers should be

supervised till they acquire proper skills of breastfeeding by the trained personnel emphasizing on position and attachment. Health education regarding breastfeeding should be given to all members of the family.

Limitations:

This study was done in the postnatal ward. The patients were not followed up for six months.

Funding:

No

Conflict of interest:

None

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