



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Medicine

AWARENESS ABOUT POSTNATAL CARE AND FEEDING PRACTICES TO BE FOLLOWED AMONG MOTHERS OF CHILDREN UNDER TWO YEARS ATTENDING IMMUNIZATION CLINICS IN PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRES OF TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT, TAMILNADU

KEY WORDS: Feeding practices, postnatal care, services, breastfeeding, mothers

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ABSTRACT

Background: Awareness among mothers regarding postnatal visits, complications in the postnatal period, advantages of exclusive breastfeeding and proper complementary feeding practices plays a main role in the health of the mother and children and proper well-being of children.

Materials and methods: A cross-sectional study conducted among 250 mothers having children less than 2 years residing in the service areas of selected three primary health centres in Tirunelveli district and attended the immunization clinic during the study period were included through convenience sampling.

Results: Among the 250 mothers, only 47% have practiced exclusive breastfeeding during the first 6 months of age of their children, 50% followed both breast feeding & bottle feed and 3% had practiced only bottle feeding. Around 18% of mothers initiated breastfeeding after 4 hours and 14% faced problems while initiation of breastfeeding. Only 67% mothers were aware about appropriate complementary feeding practices. Among the 250 mothers, awareness about postnatal exercises and postnatal visits were 13% and 32%.

Conclusion: Awareness about appropriate feeding practices and postnatal care were less among the mothers interviewed. Health education sessions need to be conducted regularly in health centres.

Introduction

Maternal health is more important to families, communities and for the country because of its impact on the health of both mother and children. As per Sample Registration System, Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has declined from 212 / 100,000 live births in 2007-09 to 178/100,000 live births in 2010- 121. Even though there is a declining trend in MMR the recent years, it is still high and needs more attention.

As per NFHS-4 factsheet for Tamilnadu, around 74.1% mothers had received postnatal care within 2 days of delivery from a doctor/ LHV/ nurse/ midwife /ANM/ /other health personnel. Only 48.3% children were exclusively breastfed under the age of 6 months and only 21.4% breastfed children in the age of 6-23 months have received an adequate diet. Around 27.1% children under the age of 5 years were stunted and 19.7% children under the age of 5 years were wasted. Awareness about the mothers regarding postnatal visits, complications in the postnatal period, advantages of exclusive breastfeeding and proper complementary feeding practices plays a main role in the health of the mother, children and proper well-being of children.

Materials and methods

Objective: The present study was planned to assess the awareness of mothers regarding postnatal visits, postnatal complications and regarding appropriate feeding practices to be followed in the service areas of three Primary Health Centres in Tirunelveli district of South India.

Study type: Cross-sectional study

Study population: 250 mothers having children less than 2 years residing in the service areas of three primary health centres in Tirunelveli district were included in the study.

Sampling technique: 250 mothers who attended the immunization clinic in the three primary health centres during the study period were selected through convenience sampling. Equal numbers of mothers were interviewed in all three primary health centres.

Study setting: Study was carried out in the immunization clinic of the three selected primary health centres.

Study duration: 2 months (November and December 2016)

Procedure:

Mothers having children less than 2 years who attended the immunization clinic for vaccination were approached for the study. Objectives of the study were explained and confidentiality was assured. Among mothers who consented for the study, a pre-designed, pretested questionnaire was administered and data were collected. Privacy was maintained during data collection and collected data were entered in Microsoft excel sheet 2010 and analysed using SPSS software version 21. Descriptive analysis was done and results are expressed in prevalence percentages.

Results

Table.1. Awareness about appropriate feeding practices and feeding practices followed among mothers studied (n=250)

Age category in years	Number	Percentage
19-29	175	70%
30-39	68	27%
≥40	8	3%
Feeding practices		
Awareness about exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months	135	54%
Practiced exclusive Breastfeeding	118	47%
Practiced both Breast feeding & Bottle feed	125	50%
Practiced only bottle feeding	8	3%
Provided Cow's milk	102	77%
Provided Donkeys milk	31	23%
Initiation of breastfeeding		
Within half an hour	140	56%
>4 hours	45	18%
Problems faced while initiation of breastfeeding	35	14%
Practiced demand feeding	155	62%
Feeding on fixed times	65	26%
Practiced night feeding	5	2%
Appropriate Complementary feeding practices		
Aware	168	67%
Not aware	80	32%
Complementary feeds initiated		
Cow's milk	28	11%
Biscuit	38	15%
Cerelac	43	17%
Idly	115	46%

Among the 250 mothers, only 118(47%) practiced exclusive breastfeeding and 3% practiced only bottle feeding. Only 67% were aware about appropriate complementary feeding practices to be followed and idly was the common complementary food used for initiation of complementary feeding.

Table.2. Awareness about postnatal care among study subjects (n=250)

Awareness about postnatal exercises	N	Percentage
Aware	33	13%
Not aware	217	87%
Awareness about postnatal visits	80	32%
Complications in postnatal period		
Aware	31	12%
Not aware	219	88%

Among the 250 mothers, awareness about postnatal exercises and postnatal visits were 13% and 32%. Only 12% were aware about complications in postnatal period

Discussion

In the current study, awareness about postnatal exercises and postnatal visits among the mothers interviewed were 13% and 32% and only 12% were aware about the common complications in postnatal period. This is low when compared with study by Sandhya Timilsina et al³ among 196 postnatal Mothers in Nepal which showed 62.76% average knowledge among mothers on postnatal care and knowledge was high regarding the danger signs of mothers and regarding newborn.

In the present study, 135 (54%) mothers were aware about exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and among them only 118(47%) had practiced exclusive breastfeeding. This is less when compared with the survey results of NFHS-4, which showed 48.3% mothers had practiced exclusive breastfeeding for children under the age of 6 months in Tamilnadu state². About 3% of mothers had provided only bottle feeding to their babies. Among the mothers who have not practiced exclusive breastfeeding, 77% had administered cow's milk and 19% provided donkeys milk. Awareness found in the present study is less when compared with study by Purani et al⁴ among 200 postnatal mothers in a tertiary care hospital in Gujarat, India that showed 78% of mothers were aware that breastfeeding should be given exclusively till 6 months of age.

But study by Joshi et al⁵ among 600 postnatal mothers in a tertiary care hospital, India showed that only 1.16% mothers practiced exclusive breastfeeding. This is less when compared with the present study in which 118(47%) mothers had practiced exclusive breastfeeding.

A hospital-based cross-sectional study by Rao et al⁶ among 200 mothers in Mangalore showed that only 77.5% mothers had initiated complementary feeding at 6 months, and only 32% had provided adequate complementary feeding. In the current study only 67% mothers were aware about appropriate complementary feeding practices and for initiation 17% mothers had used instant cereal food based items available in market and 15% mothers initiated with biscuits. This shows awareness among mothers regarding proper complementary foods to be initiated to their children was less which can affect the growth and well-being of the children.

Conclusion:

Awareness about postnatal care among the mothers in the present study was too less. Health care providers role in improving the knowledge of mothers on these aspects needs to be emphasized. Antenatal clinics should be utilized to create awareness among mothers on these aspects. Regular health education sessions should be conducted in immunization clinic of health centres and other health facilities to improve the mothers knowledge on appropriate feeding practices to ensure proper physical and mental development of children.

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