



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Home Science

STUDY OF PATTERN AND PERCEPTION OF EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING AND FACTORS AFFECTING BREASTFEEDING AMONG THE MOTHERS OF JABALPUR

KEY WORDS: exclusive breastfeeding, pre-lacteal feed, early initiation of breast feeding, infant formula.

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ABSTRACT

Background – Exclusive breastfeeding means that an infant receives only breast milk from his or her mother or a wet nurse, or expressed breast milk, and no other liquids or solids, not even water, with the exception of oral rehydration solution, drops or syrups consisting of vitamins, minerals supplements or medicines. But it has been observed that the practice of breastfeeding is not properly followed by mothers.
Aims: To study the pattern and perception of exclusive breastfeeding and factors affecting breast feeding practices among the mothers.
Materials & Methods: Cross sectional study was conducted by collecting data in a pretested questionnaire from 500 mothers who visited outpatient department of Pediatrics department in NSBC Medical College, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh between July 2015 to August 2016.
Results – Approximately 49.6% of mothers initiated breast feeding within the first hour after delivery and 28.4% of respondents gave pre-lacteal feed to infants in whom the most common feed was honey (52.11%). The majority of respondents (78.4%) were aware of exclusive breastfeeding. 79.6% of the respondents know the importance of breast feeding. Among participants who did not give exclusive breastfeed after delivery, the most common type of milk given other than breast milk was infant formula milk (49.07%) and cow milk (35.18%).
Conclusion – The study finding indicates that mother's educational status and type of family were significantly associated with exclusive breastfeeding. There is still lack of awareness regarding breast feeding among mothers of Jabalpur region of Madhya Pradesh which can be improved by more intensive work by health care providers.

INTRODUCTION

Breast milk is the main source of nourishment in the first year of life for healthy growth and development of infants. Mother milk has valuable composition which is best for the growing children.¹ The nature has made mother's milk sufficient enough to meet the needs of the infant. WHO and UNICEF have recommended exclusively breastfeeding to the infants for first six months of life.² Exclusively breastfed has been defined as giving breast milk (including expressed breast milk or breast milk from a wet nurse) but allowing the infant to receive ORS, drops, syrups (vitamins, minerals, medicines), and nothing else.²

Exclusively breastfeeding practice not only provide benefits to mother and child but also the society get benefitted as the exclusively breastfeeding practice can save health care cost.³ According to UNICEF 2018, the worldwide exclusive breastfeed rate of infants is 41% and in India it is 54.9%.⁴

Colostrum is the first milk produced after delivery and it is important for future health and growth of infants as it is highly nutritious and helps in building the immunity of child.⁵ But due to misbeliefs and traditional practice, colostrum is discarded and pre-lacteal feeds are introduced to newborn in their initial days of life. Pre-lacteal feeds are given to newborns for many different reasons/ beliefs like it clean baby's bowels, keep mouth and throat moist, keep baby warm, soothe the baby, relief pain, and act as a laxatives which allow stool to be passed.⁶ Mother plays an important role in the physical growth and development of infant as breastfeeding promotes the bonding between mother and infant. Thus mother's nutritional status, education, beliefs and attitude leads to an important role in child rearing practices. Therefore this study was conducted to assess the perception of the mothers about the importance of breast feeding and evaluate the feeding practices followed by them.

METHODS

The study was designed as a cross-sectional study of mothers

with infants aging up to 12 months. After obtaining institutional ethical clearance the data was collected from 500 mothers by random sampling techniques, who attended with their children in the outpatient department of Pediatrics in NSBC Medical College, Jabalpur between July 2015 to August 2016.

Inclusion criteria –

The mothers between 18 to 35 years visiting OPD of Pediatrics department for treatment of their child and were willing to give required information after informed consent. Only those mothers whose child was below 12 months of age were included in the study.

Exclusion criteria –

Mothers who did not gave consent; mothers who were more worried for the health condition of their child and those children who need hospitalization were also excluded from the study. The children who were brought by the relatives of mother or father were also excluded.

A pretested questionnaire consisting different questions was used to obtain demographic information. The information about feeding practices such as colostrum, duration of breast feeding, pre-lacteal feeds was noted. Mothers were asked about time of initiation of breastfeeding after delivery and their knowledge about importance of breastfeeding. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 20.

RESULTS

Table 1: Socio demographic characteristics of mothers

Characteristics	Category	N = 500	%
Family type	Joint family	326	65.2
	Nuclear family	174	34.8
Level of education of mother	Illiterate	52	10.4
	Primary	118	23.6
	Junior secondary	129	25.8

	Senior secondary	98	19.6
	Bachelor	79	15.8
	Post graduate	24	4.8
Occupational status of mother	Employed	83	16.6
	Unemployed	417	83.4

As shown in table 01, most of the respondents were from joint family type. In education status, majority of respondents were educated as 10.4% did not receive any type of education. Majority of responding mother were unemployed/housewives.

According to the data in table 2, almost 50% of mothers initiated breast feeding within one hour after delivery. 28.4% of mothers gave pre lacteal feeds to infants. Among different types of pre lacteals, honey was given by majority (52.11%) of mothers, followed by ghutti and other food items. 79.6% of the mothers knew the importance of breastfeeding for child and almost similar percentage (78.4%) of mothers practiced exclusive breastfeeding up to six months of age. Out of 108 mothers who did not follow the practice of exclusive breastfeeding, 49.07% mothers gave breast milk along with infant formula milk.

Table 03 shows that the education status of mother was significantly associated with exclusive breastfeeding practice and perception about importance of breastfeeding. More than 79.6% mothers knew that breast feeding is important for their child and similar percentage (78.4%) of mothers practiced exclusive breastfeeding. Mother's family type was also significantly associated with exclusive breastfeeding practice and perception about importance of

breastfeeding.

Table 2: Perception and practice of breastfeeding and prelacteal feed.

Initiation of breastfeeding	N=500	percentage
Early initiation (within first hour)	248	49.6
Late initiation	252	50.4
Pre-lacteal feeds given	N=500	
Yes	142	28.4
No	358	71.6
Type of pre-lacteal feeds given	N=142	
Honey	74	52.11
Ghutti	60	42.25
Others(water ,tea, cow milk, infant formula)	8	5.63
Knowledge about importance of breastfeeding		
N=500		
Yes	398	79.6
No	102	20.4
Exclusive breastfeeding practice	N=500	
Yes	392	78.4
No	108	21.6
Type of milk given(before 6 months)	N = 108	
Breast milk + cow milk	38	35.18
Breast milk + infant formula	53	49.07
Cow milk + infant formula	06	5.55
Infant formula	11	10.18

Table 3: Association between maternal education, occupation status and family type with exclusive breastfeeding practice and perception about importance of breastfeeding

Education status	Practice of exclusive breastfeeding		χ^2 P<0.01*	Importance of breastfeeding for child		Total	χ^2
	Yes	No		Yes	No		
Illiterate	45(86.5)	7(13.5)	P<0.001*	22(42.3)	30(57.7)	52	P<0.001*
Primary	104(88.1)	14(11.9)		75(63.6)	43(36.4)	118	
Junior secondary	98(76.0)	31(24.0)		109(84.5)	20(15.5)	129	
Senior secondary	65(66.3)	33(33.7)		89(90.8)	9(9.2)	98	
Bachelor	60(75.9)	19(24.1)		79(100)	0	79	
Masters	20(83.3)	4(16.7)		24(100)	0	24	
Total	392(78.4)	108(21.6)		398(79.6)	102(20.4)	500	
Occupational status							
Unemployed	323(77.5)	94(22.5)	P>0.05	339(81.3)	78(18.7)	417	P<0.05*
Employed	69(83.1)	14(16.9)		59(71.1)	24(28.9)	83	
Total	392(78.4)	108(21.6)		398(79.6)	102(20.4)	500	
Family type							
Joint family	269(82.5)	57(17.5)	P<0.01*	246(75.5)	80(24.5)	326	P<0.01*
Nuclear family	123(70.7)	51(29.3)		152(87.4)	22(12.6)	174	
Total	392(78.4)	108(21.6)		246(75.5)	80(24.5)	500	

*significant

DISCUSSION

In the present we observed that approximately 50% mothers initiated breast feeding within the first hour after delivery and 79.6% of mothers knew the importance of breast feeding for their child. This result is consistent with study conducted on knowledge and practice of exclusive breastfeeding among women in rural Utter Pradesh.⁷ Naseem and Mazher (2016) reported in their study that majority of mother had initiated breastfeeding within first hour after delivery.⁸

In relation to infant feeding practices we observed that most of the mothers did not believe in giving any pre-lacteal feed. The prelacteal feeding rate observed in our study is consistent with the finding of a study done in Nepal by Khanal et al 2013.⁹ In our study the common prelacteal feed

introduced to baby was honey by 52.86% of mothers, followed by commercially available ghutti by 42.86% of mothers. This observation is consistent with findings of other studies like the study by Jayarama and Ramaiah (2017) showed that the most common prelacteal feed was honey (36.36%) followed by religious water (33.33%), sugar water (18.18%), jaggery (10.6%) and coconut water (3.88%).¹⁰

The prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding in this study was 78.4%. The studies by Essien et al, 2009 showed exclusive breastfeeding prevalence of 60%, Okafor et al, 2014 reported 52.9% and Sholeye et al, 2015 reported 56.1% prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding.^{11,12,13} While comparing the prevalence rate with other studies we observed in our study a higher prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding.

The result of our study shows that there was a significant association between level of mother's education and practice of exclusive breastfeeding. Practice of exclusive breastfeeding was also significantly associated with type of family but not significantly with occupational status of mother. Study conducted by Sholeye et al (2015) also showed significant association between maternal educational status and practice of exclusive breastfeeding.¹³ The current study also shows significant association with mother knowledge about importance of breastfeeding and mother's level of education, occupational status and family type. Shafee et al (2011) also found that knowledge of breastfeeding is significantly associated with educational status of mothers.¹⁴

CONCLUSION

On the basis of this study, we concluded that the prevalence of exclusive breast feeding was higher among mothers of living in and around Jabalpur district of central India. The practice of exclusive breast feeding was highly influence by mother educational status which promotes healthy growth and development of infant. The data indicated that majority of mother knew the importance of breastfeeding for child. So it can be recommended that health care providers can play an important role by providing knowledge about importance of breastfeeding and discouraging the traditional practice of pre-lacteal feeding, providing awareness about the risks associated with prelacteal feeding and misconceptions on breastfeeding.

Declaration:

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Conflict of interest: None

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