

## A DESCRIPTIVE CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY OF BREAST FEEDING PRACTICE

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### Abstract

**Background:** This study describe the breastfeeding practices. This study was describe the breastfeeding practices and factors affected initiation and duration of breastfeeding

**Methods:** The cross sectional study was conducted on mothers with infants less than 1 year who came to immunization center for vaccination was included in the study. Total 500 mothers include in this study.

**Results:** Only 35.20% of the mothers did the exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months and started weaning after 6 months. A total 56.00% of mothers in our study prematurely started weaning.

**Conclusions:** The study emphasizes the need for breastfeeding intervention programs especially for the mothers during antenatal and postnatal check-ups. The information regarding the advantage and duration of breastfeeding need to be provided for the community as a whole.

**Keywords:** Breastfeeding, Immunization, Infants.

### Introduction

Breastfeeding is one of most important determinants of child survival, birth spacing, and prevention of childhood infections. The importance of breastfeeding has been emphasized in various studies. The importance of immunological and nutritional value of breast milk has been demonstrated.<sup>1</sup>

The beneficial effects of breastfeeding depend on breastfeeding initiation, its duration. Breastfeeding practices vary among different regions and communities in India, breastfeeding in rural areas appear to be shaped by the belief of a community, which are further influenced by social, cultural, and economic factors.<sup>2</sup>

### Materials and methods

The cross sectional study was conducted on mothers with infants less than 1 year who came to immunization center for vaccination were included in the study. Total 500 mothers include in this study. Verbal consent was obtained. Those who are not willing to participated were excluded.

The pre-tested questionnaire included various factors that had a potential effect on the initiation and duration of breastfeeding practice. The questionnaire included socio-economic and demographical data, details on the initiation and duration of breastfeeding. A pre-test run was done to

validate questionnaire for socio-economic status, a standard of living index<sup>3</sup> was used that can be used for both urban and rural backgrounds.

Statistical analysis used: data analysis was done according to descriptive statistics. Result is given in percentages.

### Results |

In our study, the majority of the mothers were between the ages of 21 and 25 years old (53%). About 40% of mothers were illiterate and 48% belonged to low socio-economic class. The majority of mothers were housewives (88%) and mothers who were employed were (12%).

#### Initiation of breast feeding

Most of the mothers initiates breast feeding (98%) and the others (2%) were not able to initiate due to separation from mother or due to advice from the mother-in-law.

A total of 32% mothers initiates breastfeeding within 30 minutes with normal delivery and 49% mothers delay of 2 to 3 hours in our study. A total of 19% of the mothers in our study did not breast feed even after 24 hours after the delivery. They were given pre lacteal feed and discarded colostrums. Sugar water, honey and ghee are commonly used pre lacteal feed.

**Table 1: Duration of breastfeeding**

Duration	number	percentage
<6 months	280	56.00%
>6 months and started weaning	176	35.20%
>6 months and not yet started weaning	44	8.80%

Only 35.20% of the mothers did the exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months and started weaning after 6 months. A total 56.00% of mothers in our study prematurely started weaning.

Only 5% mothers continued to breastfeed the baby even at 9 months. A total of 76% of the mothers followed on demand feeding practice and rooming in. cow milk (29%) was most common food used for infants who were breastfed less than 6 months followed by mix milk and water. Only 16% mothers used commercial infants formula.

Among the mothers who started weaning exclusive breastfeeding after 6 months (57%), cow milk was most common weaning food (36%).

### Discussion

Women have a very positive attitude towards initiation of breastfeeding. In this study almost all the women had initiated breastfeeding and continued to breastfeed beyond 6 months. Benakappa DG et al<sup>4</sup> and Chandrashekar TS et al<sup>5</sup> also show similar pattern.

Breast milk should be initiated within half hour of delivery.<sup>6</sup> The delay in initiation will lead to a delay in the development of oxytocin reflexes, which are very important for the contraction of the uterus and the breast milk reflex. In our study, initiated breastfeeding within 30 minutes of childbirth, which is a good practice.

Pre lacteal feeds should not be given but still the majority of mothers gives either sugar water or honey. discarding the colostrums is still practiced widely. the colostrums is rich in vitamins, minerals, and immunoglobulins that protects the child from infections<sup>7</sup>. Discarding the colostrums and feeding the child with honey or sugar water makes the child vulnerable to infection. Sharma M et al have also found similar practices in the community and it is largely influenced by the relatives and the primary care providers during childbirth.<sup>8</sup>

### Conclusions

The study emphasizes the need for breastfeeding intervention programs especially for the mothers during antenatal and postnatal check-ups. The information regarding the advantage and duration of breastfeeding need to be provided for the community as a whole. Practices such as discarding the colostrum and early or late weaning should be discouraged and community based health education programs is needed.

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