

A DESCRIPTIVE CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY OF BREAST FEEDING PRACTICE

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Abstract

Background: Breastfeeding practices play an important role in reducing child mortality and morbidity.

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 36% of the mothers did the exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months and started weaning after 6 months. A total 59% 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: Immunization, Infants, Mothers.

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.¹⁻² The importance of immunological and nutritional value of breast milk has been demonstrated.

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.³⁻⁵

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-economice 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 ⁶ was used that can be used for both urban and rural backgrounds.

Statistical analysis used: data analysis was done according to descriptive statistics.

Results Percentage distribution of study population by socio demographic characteristic

Total mothers=500mothers

Table 1:

Socio demographic profile	Number	Percentage
Mothers age		
<21 years	100	20
21-25 years	290	58
26-30 years	80	16
>30 years	30	6
Formal education		
None	180	36
Primary to secondary	240	48
College	80	16
mothers employment		
working	410	82
Not working	90	18

Socio economics status		
Low	220	44
Medium	240	48
High	40	8

In our study, the majority of the mothers were between the ages of 21 and 25 years old (58%). About 36% of mothers were illiterate and 44% belonged to low socio-economic class.

Initiation of breast feeding

Most of the mothers initiates breast feeding (98%)and the others(2%)were not able to initiates 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 48%mothers delay of 2 to 3hours in our study. A total of 20%of the mothers in our study did not breast feed even after 24 hour after the delivery. They were given pre lacteal feed and discarded colostrums. Sugar water, honey and ghee are commonly used pre lacteal feed.

Table 2: Duration of breastfeeding

Duration	number	percentage
<6 months	295	59.00%
>6 months and started weaning	180	36.00%
>6 months and not yet started weaning	25	5%

Only 36% of the mothers did the exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months and started weaning after 6 months. A total 59%of mothers in our study prematurely started weaning.

Only 6% mothers continued to breastfeed the baby even at 9 months. A total of 76% of the mothers followed on demend feeding practice and rooming in.cow milk (30%) was most common food used for infants who were breastfeed less than 6 months followed by mix milk and water. only 16% mothers usedcommerical 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 ⁷and Chandrashekhar TS et al ⁸ also show similar pattern.

Breast milk should be initiated within half hour of delivery ⁹The 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 30minutes 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 infectins¹⁰. 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 childbirth¹¹.

Exclusive breastfeeding should be continued for 6 months¹². It protects the child from malnutrition, infection and helps the overall development of child. The prematurely start weaning the child, which may lead to development of infection and may have a long term effect on the physical growth of the child. The main reason given for the mother to start early weaning was insufficient milk, which may be due to the early age marriage (those who were yonger than 19 years old) and early child birth. Studies indicate that adolescents breastfeed less often than adults and they hold positive and negative attitude toward breastfeeding that influence decision making and breastfeeding¹³⁻¹⁴.

Most of the mothers received information regarding breastfeeding from health workers and doctors. The development of counselling skills among doctors helps in conveying the right message to mothers about breastfeeding and weaning practices¹⁵.

The influence of the mother-in-law and self assumption about lack of milk for the baby are sited as major reasons for early and late 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. 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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