Study on Breastfeeding Practices Among Mothers in a Tertiary Care Hospital in Udaipur, Rajasthan

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ABSTRACT

Background: Breastfeeding is the first fundamental right of the child. Positive impact of the breastfeeding on the health and development of the child has been documented in many of the research studies. Human breast milk is a nature’s perfect gift, superior to anything available for child food. Breastfeeding is the least expensive, all time available and healthiest food of the child which reduces the morbidity and mortality of child. Breastfeeding improves maternal health, reduces the risk of ovarian and breast cancer. Objectives: a) To study the breastfeeding practices among mothers having, a child less than two years. b) To know the socio-demographic factor among study subjects.

Materials and methods: A cross-sectional purposive study was conducted in the pediatric outpatient department of Geetanjali Medical College and Hospital, Udaipur. A total of 300 nursing mothers having child up to two years of age were included in this study. A predesigned questionnaire was used to collect information from the mother on the socio-demographic factor and breastfeeding practices. Study period: July 2014 to December 2014, over a period of six months. Results: Age of selected mothers ranged between 18 – 35 years of age, (24.33%) were illiterate, (72.67%) Hindu and (54.67%) belonged to the joint family. In socio-economic status (35.0%) mothers were from class V. Only (22.0%) mothers initiated breastfeeding within one hour, exclusive breastfeeding for four to six months was observed in (65.67%), for six to twelve months (20.0%), and duration of breastfeeding for more than twelve months (49.0%). Conclusion: The study revealed that initiation and duration of breastfeeding were observed to less extent with a good magnitude of exclusive breastfeeding, but still there is a need to educate mothers by programmes of interventions of ideal breastfeeding practices during antenatal and postnatal check-ups with social mobilization campaign.

KEYWORDS: Exclusive breastfeeding, Children, Maternal health

INTRODUCTION

Breast milk is the first safe and complete food which a baby gets from mother. The infant gets the energy and essential nutrients from the breast milk to survive during initial days of life for proper growth and development. Breast milk protects against diarrhoeal diseases and respiratory infections. It also promotes a bonding between mother and baby. Nature has created a way of breastfeeding to nurture a baby properly, mother is also confident that she has contributed a lot for sense of security and the health. Exclusive breastfeeding and longer duration of breastfeeding is known to protect the child by enhancing the development of brain, learning readiness and to reduce the risk of obesity. Breastfeeding is one of the most important determinants of child survival, birth spacing and prevention of infections. The nutritional and health status of infants mainly depends upon breastfeeding practices. A properly breastfed child is less likely to die or become ill, especially when exclusive breastfeeding is practiced for 4 - 6 months in developing country like India.

The beneficial effects of breastfeeding depend on breastfeeding initiation, exclusively on breast milk for four to six months of age with weaning and appropriate complementary food started. Breastfeeding practices are influenced by socio-economic factors, cultural background, and psychological status of mother, religious values, and literacy rate.

The NFHS-3 data of India shows that 21.5% of children were breastfed within one hour of birth, 48.3% were exclusively breastfed till five months. The practice of breastfeeding among Indian mothers is almost universal, but initiation of breastfeeding is quite late, and the colostrum is usually discarded. Only 35% of infants in the world are exclusively breastfed during the 1st 4 months of life, and complementary feeding begins either too early or too late with foods, which are often nutritionally inadequate and unsafe. Poor breastfeeding practices in initial period of life of a child may result in, malnutrition, poor physical and mental development with reduced productivity in future. Therefore, the present study was carried out to assess the pattern of breast...
feeding practices in the mothers who had delivered in the last two year.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To study the breastfeeding practices among mothers having child up to two years of age.
- To know the socio-demographic factor among study subjects.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A cross-sectional study was conducted on 300 nursing mothers having children up to two year of age, attending the outpatient pediatric department of Geetanjali Medical College and Hospital, Udaipur. An orally expressed consent was taken from each of participant by purposively sampling method, selected over a period of 6 months. A predesigned questionnaire was used to collect information from the mother on the socio-demographic factor (age, religion, type of family, education and socio-economic status), and breastfeeding practices.

**RESULTS**

Out of 300 participating mothers, 170 (56.67%) were from the urban area and rest 130 (43.33%) rural. Majority 131 (43.67%) were observed in the age group 18 to 23 years and minimum 42 (14.0%) in the age group 30 to 35 years. The rural mothers 69 (53.08%) were maximum in the age group 18 to 23 while the urban 79 (46.47%) were in the age group 24 to 29 years. Majority 218 (72.67%) of the subjects belonged to Hindu religion, and majority were from joint family 164 (54.67%). The majority of mothers of the rural area were illiterates 53 (40.77%) while urban mothers were educated up to primary 62 (36.47%). Maximum of the mothers 105 (35.0%) belonged to class-V, followed by class IV (25.33%) and class III (19.0%).

In our study, only 66 (22.0%) of the mothers had initiated breastfeeding within one hour against 46 (15.33%) who initiated after 12 hours of delivery. (Table 2)

In urban 139 (81.77%) and in rural 118 (90.77%) respondents were exclusively breastfed for four to twelve months of age. (Table 3)

Breastfeeding was extended for more than twelve months by 147 (49.0%) mothers. The duration of breastfeeding for less than six months was observed in 26 (15.29%) of urban and 17 (13.08%) of rural mothers. (Table 4)

**DISCUSSION**

In the present study most of the mothers (72.67%) were Hindu, similar findings were observed (73.9%) by Mahmood et al.1 and (96.2%) by D. K. Tanega. In this study (54.67%) participants were from joint family, (62.31%) of rural and (48.82%) urban mothers belonged to joint family. This is comparable with D. K. Tanega where (56.47%) of mothers were from joint families. The higher percentage of the rural joint family is due to custom of married couples usually live with their parents. In our study (40.77%) rural mothers were illiterate, while (22.0%) mothers delivered within one hour. In the study of Solanki SL et al.2, study (54.67%) participants were from joint family, (62.31%) of rural and (48.82%) urban mothers belonged to joint family. This is comparable with D. K. Tanega where (56.47%) of mothers were from joint families. The higher percentage of the rural joint family is due to custom of married couples usually live with their parents. In our study (40.77%) rural mothers were illiterate, while (22.0%) mothers delivered within one hour.
In our study the percentage of mothers who had exclusively breastfed for 4 to 6 months were (65.67%), which is higher than the (46.0%) at national level, but nearly similar (70.2%) by study of Kulkarni et al., and (60.0%) by Banapurmath et al. The exclusive breastfeeding for four to six months was observed in the urban (28.33%) by Roy S. et al., not comparable to our findings (70.0%) of urban mothers.

In our study majority of the mothers (49.0%) breastfed their babies for more than 12 months, followed by (36.67%) for 6-12 months and (14.33%) for less than 6 months of duration. Similar findings were observed by M C Yadavannavar et al. (58.06%), (26.61%) and (15.32%) respectively, and study by Anantha L et al. observed (67.4%) of mothers who breastfed for more than 12 months and (32.6%) for 6-12 months.

**CONCLUSION**

The study highlighted that only (22.0%) of mothers initiated breastfeeding within one hour of delivery, exclusively breastfeeding (65.67%) for period of 4 to 6 months and the duration of breastfeeding for more than twelve months of duration was observed (49.0%). The recommendation of breastfeeding practices by WHO are still not achieved. Nursing mothers need to be educated for ideal breast feeding practices through the campaign of mass social mobilization, and motivation during antenatal and post-natal health check-ups. The health care providers should also emphasize the need and benefits of ideal breastfeeding practices to nursing mothers.

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