



KAP (KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION) STUDY OF BREAST FEEDING MOTHERS OF BABIES AGED ≤ 6 MONTHS

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Article Received on 15/04/2018

Article Revised on 06/05/2018

Article Accepted on 27/05/2018

ABSTRACT

Background: Although exclusive breast feeding is universally accepted as the best feeding for the babies during first 6 months of life, only 40 % of women do breast feed their babies for some wrong perceptions and misconceptions. **Methods:** Women having babies in the age group of ≤ 6 months were interviewed and the findings were recorded as per predesigned proforma, designed to assess their knowledge, attitude and perception regarding breast feeding. **Results:** Breast feeding was practiced by 72% of mothers. Twenty percent (20%) of the mothers were giving formula milk and eight percent (8%) animal milk to their babies. The main reason for not giving exclusive breast feeding was the perception that the mother is not producing enough milk (75%). Almost all the mothers (97%) were aware of advantages of breast feeding and no one (0%) was thinking that it is harmful. Majority of the mothers were aware of the advantage of breast milk and time of weaning. **Conclusion:** Majority of the mothers are aware of the advantage of breast milk and time of weaning. But a significant proportion of women either does not breast feed their babies or start early weaning with the perception that they are not producing enough milk.

KEYWORDS: Breast feeding, knowledge, Attitude, Perception.

INTRODUCTION

It is universally accepted that the breast feeding is the best feeding for a baby in the first 6 months of life. Exclusive breast feeding in the first six months of life is the recommendation from the world health organization (WHO) and other health organizations.^[1,2] Even After the introduction of semisolid foods at six months of age, it is recommended to continue breastfeeding until one to two years of age or more.^[2] Despite the tremendous stress given on breast feeding in first 6 months of life, only 40% of the babies are breast fed during this period.^[1] Given the importance of breast feeding and benefits that it confers to the babies, it is the need of the hour to help more and more women to breast feed their babies during the first six months of life. This is possible only when we understand the magnitude of the problem in a given population and then devise strategies accordingly to address the issue. We planned this study to understand the magnitude of the problem and other associated factors having influence on breast feeding practices especially during the first 6 months of life.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This cross sectional observational study was conducted at MCCH Anantnag which is a secondary level health

care centre for women and children in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, India. This study was conducted between March 2018 and May 2018. Study was commenced after taking ethical clearance from hospital ethical committee and written informed consent from the parents or guardians of the patients. A total of 100 mothers having babies less or equal to 6 months of age were interviewed. The interview was conducted and the answers were recorded as per predesigned proforma which was specifically designed to assess knowledge, attitude and perception of mothers regarding breast feeding.

OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

The demographic and other baselines characters have been depicted in table 1. Knowledge, attitude and perception of mothers regarding breast feeding is shown in table 2 & 3.

DISCUSSION

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study in the Kashmir valley at secondary level of health care system that examines knowledge, attitude and perception of mothers regarding breast feeding in the first 6 months of age of their babies. We enrolled 100 mothers in our

study. Majority of our subjects was mothers aged between 20 to 30 years (65%), from rural back ground (78%) and multipara (60%). Most of the mothers (84%) were literate, from joint families (76%), from middle socioeconomic back ground (64%). There was slight preponderance of male sex in babies (56%) and majority

were of birth order 2 (42%) followed by birth order 1 (36%). Most of the pregnancies were planned (71%) and sex preference at the time of birth was male (60%). Mode of delivery was vaginal in 69% cases and 31% babies were born by LSCS (table 1).

Table 1: Demographic and other Baseline characteristics of study population (n=100).

Attribute		No. of cases / %age
Age (years)	≤ 19	0
	20 – 30	65
	≥ 30	35
Residence	Rural	78
	Urban	22
Parity	Primipara	40
	Multipara	60
Education qualification of mother	Illiterate	16
	< 8 th standard	10
	< 12 th standard	50
	>12 th standard	24
Type of family	Nuclear	24
	Joint	76
Socioeconomic status	Lower	18
	Lower middle	32
	Upper middle	30
	Upper	20
Marital status	Widowed / Separated	4
	In active marriage	96
Birth order of baby	First	36
	2 nd	42
	≥ 3	22
Gender of baby	Male	56
	Female	44
Sex preference at the time of birth	Male	72
	Female	28
Planned pregnancy	Yes	71
	No	29
Mode of delivery	LSCS	31
	Vaginal	69

Breast feeding was practiced by 72% of mother followed by formula milk (20%). Eight percent (8%) of the mothers were giving animal milk to their babies. This is in conformity with other studies.^[3,4] The main reason for

not giving exclusive breast milk was the perception that the mother is not producing enough milk [(75%) table 2]. This has been reported by other researchers as well.^[5,6]

Table 2: Feeding Practices and attitude of mothers related to breast feeding (n=100).

Attribute		No. of cases / %age
Type of feeding	Breast feeding	72
	Infant formula	20
	Animal milk	8
Reasons for not giving breast feeding (if not on breast feeding)	Not willing to give breast feeding	0
	No producing enough milk	21
	Mother not well	5
	Mother dead	0
	Baby separated from the baby	2

How giving formula or animal feeding	Bottle	22
	Spoon	6
	Palladi	0
Weaning started? If yes the age at the time of weaning	≤ 3 months	0
	4-5 month	3
	5-6 months	30
	Not yet	67

Majority of the mothers were giving formula or animal feeds through bottle (78.5%). Though weaning was not started until 6 months of age in majority of the babies but as many as 33% of mothers had started it before 6 months. Insufficient milk production was reported as the

main reason for early weaning (Table 2). Almost all the mothers (97%) were aware of advantages of breast feeding and no one (0%) was thinking that it is harmful (Table 3). This is in accordance with the findings reported by other researchers.^[7,8]

Table 3: Knowledge and perception of the mothers regarding breast feeding (n=100).

Attribute		No. of cases / %age
Mother aware about the advantages of breast feeding	Yes	97
	No	3
Mother thinks that breast feeding is harmful	Yes	0
	No	100
Mother aware about the harmful effects of formula feeding	Yes	90
	No	10
Mother aware about the harmful effects and disadvantages of animal milk	Yes	70
	No	30
Mother aware about the age of weaning	Yes	90
	No	10
Mother aware about the age till breast feeding should preferably be continued	Yes	80
	No	20

As many as 90% of the mothers were thinking that formula feeding is harmful and 70% would believe that animal milk feeding is also harmful. When asked about the age of starting weaning, 90% of the mothers could give correct reply. Eighty percent (80%) of the mothers gave an answer that breast feeding needs to be continued for 2 years of age (Table 3). Other studies have also reported similar findings.^[5,9]

CONCLUSION

Majority of the mothers are aware of the advantage of breast milk and time of weaning. But a significant proportion of women either does not breast feed their babies or start early weaning with the perception that they are unable to produce enough milk. This seems a major area that needs to be addressed for successful exclusive breast feeding in the first six months of life.

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