

Knowledge of infant feeding practices among mothers delivered in a tertiary care hospital, Kakinada, East Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh, India

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Abstract

The objective of the study was to study the knowledge and practice regarding infant feeding. It also evaluated the influence of certain maternal factors in these practices. The details of the study are as follows:- Study design: Cross-sectional study, Study area : Government General Hospital, Kakinada, E.G.Dt. Study period: Nov & Dec 2012 Study subjects: 600 mothers Study tool: Pre -designed ,semi-structured questionnaire Data analysis: SPSS soft ware trial version 17 Test of significance : Chi-square. The results showed that age of all mothers ranged between 16-37 yrs. Majority (81%) of mothers from Hindu & nuclear family (64%). More than 50% of mothers are working. Nearly half (49%) of the mothers belong to low SES. Most (79%) of mothers were unaware that PLF should not be given. Many of them (46%) were not having the knowledge of importance of giving colostrum. Awareness regarding EIBF was found in only 42.7%. Majority (84%) of the mothers do not know about exclusive breast feeding. Awareness regarding the introduction of complementary feeds was only 20.6%. Complementary feeding is not introduced at the right age (5-6 months) by majority of the mothers though they have knowledge. ($p < 0.001$) Mothers awareness of avoiding pre-lacteal feeds is increased with increase in educational status ($p < 0.001$) Key words: infant feeding practices, Early Initiation of Breast Feeding (EIBF), Socio-Economic Status (SES) Exclusive Breast Feeding (EBF), Pre-Lacteal Feeds (PLF).

Introduction

Infant feeding practice is known to be a major factor affecting infant health. Breast feeding provides the best source of nutrition to the infants which also gives immunological and psychological benefit.

Colostrum, the first milk produced by the mother in the postnatal period is unique in its composition and consists of specific anti-infective factors which protects neonates from infection. Exclusive breast feeding is universally regarded as the preferred practice until 6 months. WHO recommends exclusive breast feeding for first 4-6 months followed by semi-solid and solid foods to complement breast milk till the child is gradually able to eat the normal food.¹

Unfortunately colostrum feeding is not given to new born for various reasons. In a mistaken belief honey, sugar water, glucose, mishri water were fed as Pre-lacteal feeds. Poor infant feeding practices are to a great extent a man

made problem which directly or indirectly contribute to infectious illness, malnutrition and mortality in infants. This study was conducted to know about the awareness and practices of infant feeding.

Objectives

1. To study the knowledge and practice regarding infant feeding 2. To study the influence of certain maternal factors in these practices.

Methodology

It is a cross-sectional study, was undertaken in Government General hospital (tertiary care hospital), Kakinada, A.P, during November and December 2012. Study sample is 600 mothers who delivered during this period. (As per the knowledge status known through the previous studies (40%), sample size is calculated using the formula $4pq/L^2$). Among them 320 were primi mothers and 280 were second para. The information regarding practice of exclusive breast feeding and introducing complementary feeds was obtained only from second para mothers. A pre-tested questionnaire was used to carry out the study. Data was analyzed by using SPSS software version 17. Statistical tests include chi-square.

Results and Discussion

The results obtained are presented in Table 1, Table 2 and Fig 1. Age of all mothers ranged between 16-37 yrs. Majority (81%) of mothers from Hindu family and belong to nuclear family (64%). More than 50% of mothers are working. Nearly half (48%) of the mothers belong to low socio-economic status. Bharadwaj N et al² had similar finding. Two thirds (66%) of the mothers are literates. Majority (79%) of mothers were unaware that pre-lacteal feeds should not be given. Similar finding was reported by Shalini Chandrasekhar et al³. Many of the study participants (46%) were not having the knowledge of importance of giving colostrum to the child. Awareness regarding early initiation of breast feeding was found in only 43%. Majority (84%) of the mothers do not know about exclusive breast feeding. Awareness regarding the introduction of complementary feeds was found in only 20.6%. Though the mothers have knowledge, in practice many (91%) of them have given pre-lacteal feeds. Almost similar finding is reported by many other authors Deeksha sharma,⁴ and Suvrapathi & B C Das⁵, Yadavannavar MC⁶ and Vijay.L et al⁷. Colostrum was not fed to 54% of infants. Gunasekhari S et al⁸, Yadavannavar MC⁶, Sing M B et al,⁹ and Yadav R J & Singh P¹⁰ had reported similar findings about colostrum feeding. According to IYCF guidelines (2006) Government Of India recommends that initiation of breast feeding should begin immediately after birth, preferably within one hour.¹¹ Early initiation of breast feeding was done by 23% of mothers only. As per the data in NFHS-3 report, breast feeding was initiated within one hour in 30.3% in urban region of India.¹² Yadav R J and Singh P¹⁰ found early initiation of breast feeding in only 29% of infants and Suvrapathi, B C Das⁵ reported 19%, Vijay.L et al⁷ also reported low (9.1%). Complementary feeding is not introduced at the right age (5-6 months) by majority of the mothers though they have knowledge. ($p < 0.01$). Sing M B et al⁹ and Suvrapathi, B C Das,⁵ had similar findings. Mothers awareness about avoiding pre-lacteal feeds is increased with increase in educational status ($p < 0.0001$).

Conclusions

Age of all mothers ranged between 16-37 yrs, maximum between 19-23 yrs. Majority of mothers were from Hindu family. Most of them belong to nuclear family. More than 50% of mothers are working. Majority (79%) of mothers were unaware of avoiding pre-lacteal feeds. Mothers knowledge of giving colostrum is only 54%. Awareness regarding early initiation of breast feeding was found in only 42%. Most of the mothers (84%) do not know about exclusive breast feeding. Awareness regarding the introduction of complementary feeds was less (20.6%). Breast feeding was observed to be a universal practice. Practice was found to be less compared to the knowledge status regarding pre-lacteal feeds, colostrum feeding and early initiation of breast feeding. Mothers awareness about avoiding pre-lacteal feeds is increased with educational status. Mothers knowledge regarding infant feeding practices was good among multi parous mothers. Knowledge of Infant feeding practices was found to be less among mothers coming from low socio-economic status.

Recommendations

Training should be given to health workers in primary care setting on need for appropriate and timely counseling of antenatal mothers on infant feeding practices. Programmes should be implemented which support and encourage breast feeding, focusing more on younger, less educated women and of low socio-economic status.

Mothers should be educated during their antenatal period regarding undisputed beneficial effects of breast feeding in early infancy, trained and supported to breast feed their newborn babies soon after birth. Home made weaning foods are to be promoted and mothers should be made aware of proper timing of feeds.

Television, magazines, posters & radio can be effectively used to educate mothers regarding proper feeding practices. Efforts aimed at improving the literacy status of women must be strengthened. All the hospitals should be baby friendly. Inclusion of the topic in school education is recommended.

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Table No 1 Socio-demographic factors of the study participants(n-600)

Age group	Age in years	Number	%
	<19 yrs	107	17.83
	19-23 yrs	355	59.16
	24-29 yrs	108	18
	30-35 yrs	22	3.67
	> 35 yrs	8	1.33
Religion	Hindu	484	80.67
	Muslim	38	6.33
	Christian	66	11
	Others	12	2
Type of family	Nuclear	384	64
	Joint	164	27.33
	Three gen. family	52	8.67
Literacy status	Illiterate	205	34.17
	Literate	395	65.83
Occupation	Non-working	286	47.67
	Working	314	52.33
Socio-economic status	Class I	32	5.3
	Class II	87	14.5
	Class III	180	30
	Class IV	261	43.5
	Class V	30	5

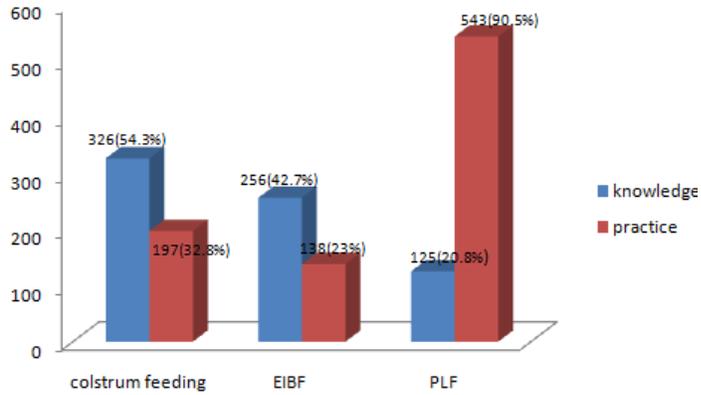


fig 1 knowledge vs practice of breast feeding(n-600)

Table no.2 knowledge of mothers regarding infant feeding practices

Knowledge (n-600)	Yes	%	No	%
EIBF	256	42.7	344	57.3
PLF	125	20.8	475	79.2
COLOSTRUM FEEDING	326	54.3	274	45.7
EBF	94	15.7	506	84.3
COMPLEMENTARY FEEDING	124	20.6	476	79.4