

Breast Feeding Practices in Rural field practice area of RRMCH, Bangalore

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Abstract

Background : Breast feeding is universal practice, but exclusive breast feeding is not practiced all over the world

Aim : To study the various practices of breast feeding in rural field practice area of Rajarajeshwari Medical college and hospital (RRMCH).

Methodology : Research question: What are the practices of mothers regarding breast feeding?

Study area: Rural field practice area, Department of Community Medicine.

Study population: Mothers who are having children below the age of 2yrs.

Study design: Cross sectional study.

Sample Size : All the mothers who visited rural health training center for health check up for the duration of two months. (300 mothers)

Data analysis: Descriptive methods expressed as percentage, Chi-square test to test the significance.

Results: 51% of the mothers had started feeding on the first day of delivery within 4 hours, 71% of them had given prelacteal feeds, 18% discarded colostrums. Exclusive breast feeding was done till 6 months (65%), started complementary feeding between 3-6 months of age (69.3%) all these practices was more among the literates (88.8%).

Conclusion : Mothers need to be educated during antenatal care regarding the importance of breast feeding the newborn babies.

Key words: exclusive breast feeding, commercial milk products, complementary feeding, prelacteal feeds.

Introduction

Breast feeding is a universal practice, but exclusive breast feeding is not practiced though recommended world- wide [1]. It is the infants first immunization[2]. Early introduction of top feeds in the form of diluted animal milk and later introductions of semi solids is widely prevalent in different parts of the country which adversely affects the health and nutritional status of the children. There are many cultural practices still prevailing in the community associated with infant feeding which needs to be addressed. Breast feeding practices is one of the burning issues among the mothers today. Keeping this in mind an effort has been made to study the breast feeding practices among mothers in our rural field practice area.

Methodology

The study was undertaken by the Dept of Community Medicine, RRMCH in rural field practice area. All the mothers who attended the health centre for health check- up and had children below two years of age were included for the study. The study duration was for two months. The sample size for the duration of the two months came up to 300 mothers. (Purposive sampling)

The mothers were interviewed with prestructured questionnaire. Data was collected on general information and their practices regarding breast feeding. Data was analyzed using descriptive methods expressed in percentages and chi-square test to test the significance.

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Results

Socio-demographic profile of the study subjects:183 (61%) of the mothers were in the age group of 18-23 yrs, 176 (58.67%) of the mothers

belonged to joint family.256 (85.33%) of the mothers were literate, belonging to class III(37%) socio-economic status according to modified B G Prasad’s classification. 292(97.3%) were home makers.

Table 1 shows that 51% of the study subjects had initiated breast feeding on first day of delivery, 18.3% discarded colostrum, 71% fed with prelacteal feeds.65% of the mothers had practiced exclusive breast feeding which was demand feeding.69.3% initiated complementary feeding by three to six months of age of infant. The mothers had not given any commercial milk products (62.3%).23.7% had practiced bottle feeding. Remaining 159 (53%) of them had not practiced bottle feeding. 70 (23.3%) of the mothers had good practice of using cup and spoon to feed their infant.

Table 2. shows that 15.7% of the mothers are not aware regarding feeding of colostrum and its importance.

Table 3. depicts that 69.3% of the mothers had started complementary feeding at 3-6 months of age more among the literate mothers (88%) which is significant statistically.

Discussion

The study reveals that 61% of the mothers were in the age group of 18-23 years belonging to joint family (58.67%) and were literate (85%), belonging to class III and IV socio-economic status (37%) who were home makers (97%). Regarding breast feeding practices 51% of the mothers had initiated feeding the new born on the first day of birth of newborn, 37% on second day with practice of prelacteal feeds been given (71%) and discarding of colostrum (18%). Yadavannavar [3] observed that breast feeding was initiated within four hours of birth

Table 1 . Breast feeding practices among the study subjects

Sl no	Breast feeding Practices	No (%)
1.	Initiation of breast feeding	
a.	First day	153 (51)
b.	Second day	112 (37)
c.	Third day	35 (12)
2.	Discarded colostrums(yes)	55(18.3)
3.	Prelacteal feeds (yes)	213 (71)
4.	Duration of exclusive breast feeding	
a	<3 months	18(6.0)
b	3-6 months	195 (65)
c	>6months	87(29)
5	Type of feeding	
	Demand feeding	298 (99.3)
	Scheduled feeding	02 (0.7)
6	Initiation of Complementary feeding	
	3-6 months	208 (69.3)
	6-9 Months	92(30.7)
7	Use of top milk and commercial milk products	
	Yes	113(37.7)
	No	187(62.3)
8.	Practice of bottle feeding	
	Yes	71 (23.7)

Table 2. Awareness regarding feeding of colostrum

Awareness status	Fed colostrum (%)	Not fed colostrum (%)	Total (%)
Not aware	28 (59.6)	19 (40.4)	47 (15.7)
Aware	217 (85.8)	36 (14.2)	253 (84.3)
Total	245 (81.7)	55 (18.3)	300 (100)

**df=1, X²=18.3 p<0.001

Table 3. Literacy status of mothers and initiation of Complementary Feeding

Initiation of Complementary feeding	Literate (%)	Illiterate (%)	Total (%)
>3-6 months	183(88)	25 (12)	208 (69.3)
>6-9 months	73 (79.3	19 (20.1)	92(30.7)
Total	256 (85.3)	44 (15.6)	300

df=3, $X^2=3.7$, $p>0.001$

(23.3%) while 8.3% took more than 24 hours of delivery. Bhardwaj [4] observed that only 11.8% of the mothers gave colostrum while it was 18% in our study. 15.7% of them are not aware regarding the importance of feeding colostrum. This is very low compared to the other studies in India where the importance of colostrum was known to be 75-90% of the mothers [5] and 56% according to study by Maheshwari [6].

Exclusive breast feeding was practiced by 65% of the mothers till three to six months of age of an infant and it was on demand feeding (99.3%). Madhu [7] et al quoted that only 40% of the mothers practiced exclusive breast feeding till six months and followed demand feeding (84%). At National level it was 46%[8].

Complementary feeding was initiated between 3-6 months of age (69.3%) which was more among literate mothers (88.8%). Reasons for early initiation of weaning were that more nourishment was required for the growth of the child. Literacy status of the mother had a significant impact with initiation of weaning ($p < 0.05$) and similar findings were quoted by Maheshwari . 23.7% of the mothers had practiced bottle feeding and the significant finding was that 23.3% had fed their infants with cup and spoon .Bharadwaj also observed that few mothers who had to go work in the fields also gave bottle feeds. 62% of the mothers had not used top milk nor commercial milk products. Gopalan [9] has reported that infants given early supplementary foods fared no better, indicating the need to improve the lactation of the

mother. 15.7% of the mothers are not aware regarding feeding of colostrums and its importance which was found to be significant statistically. Literacy status of the mothers and initiation of complementary feeding was not statistically significant while, Maheshwari et al have found a positive association between maternal educational status and breast feeding. statistically. Literacy status of the mothers and initiation of complementary feeding was not statistically significant while, Maheshwari et al have found a positive association between maternal educational status and breast feeding.

Conclusion

To mitigate the hunger of newborn child for 3-5 days, pre-lacteal feeds were given which is a very common practice in the area. Early initiation of complementary feeding, not feeding the child during illness was also our study finding which is not favorable regarding the health of children and is harmful. Mothers also need to be informed during antenatal period through information and communication practices IEC efforts. Exclusive breast feeding up to six months as recommended by WHO in its global strategy and advocated by Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) in India should become an Universal practice[9].

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