

A Quantitative Study to Assess the Mastery Regarding Breastfeeding Among Primi Mothers

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Abstract

Background: The study aims to assess the mastery of breastfeeding among primi parous mothers who were admitted to a medical college hospital in Wayanad. **Material and methods:** This study employed a non-experimental quantitative research methodology, and it involved the selection of 120 primiparous women through purposive sampling. The setting of the study was at DM WIMS. The research design was an experimental research design (post-test only control design). The target population of the study was the total number of mothers admitted to the antenatal ward and coming for consultation in the OPD. **Results:** Analyzing the knowledge scores of 120 samples, 2.5% of mothers have poor knowledge of breastfeeding, 80.83% of mothers have average knowledge of breastfeeding, and 16.6% of mothers have good knowledge.

Keywords: Knowledge, assessment, breastfeeding, primi mothers.

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of a newborn is a significant moment for any family, underscoring the utmost importance of ensuring the mother's delivery of a healthy baby. Breast milk stands out as the optimal nourishment for infants, given that breastfeeding is associated with better infant health outcomes when compared to formula feeding [1–4].

Human breast milk is an extraordinary and sustainable resource, impossible to replicate. There is no substitute for human milk, and the breast has the inherent mechanism for breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is a skill that requires proficiency. Acknowledging the tremendous significance of breastfeeding, the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) was introduced in 1996 under the auspices of UNICEF and WHO.

Breastfeeding technique is a skill learned by both mother and newborn. Breastfeeding technique consists of initiation of breastfeeding, positions during breastfeeding, attachment, removal of the baby from the breast and burping. Breastfeeding is a fundamental human practice, crucial for the well-being of both infants and mothers, and it holds significant economic importance for households and society as a whole [5–13].

The World Health Organization (WHO) suggests exclusive breastfeeding for the initial 6 months of a

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baby's life to ensure the best possible growth, development, and health outcomes. Subsequently, infants should be introduced to safe and nutritionally suitable complementary foods while continuing to breastfeed for a duration of up to 2 years or longer. Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) is characterized by feeding infants only human milk without the introduction of any other liquids or solids.

The benefits of breastfeeding for both mothers and children have been firmly established for a significant duration. However, despite compelling evidence endorsing exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) during the initial 6 months of an infant's life, its global prevalence remains limited, with an estimated approximate of one-third of infants receiving exclusive breastfeeding for the full 6 months [14–20].

In India, multiple social, cultural, and economic elements seem to influence breastfeeding practices. In response to this challenge, the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) was founded in 1991 with the objective of protecting and promoting breastfeeding. Additionally, the Government of India has initiated the National Rural Health Mission, which seeks to implement the Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Diseases (IMNCI) within the current healthcare infrastructure.

Exclusive breastfeeding has been reported as one of the main causes of poor health outcomes in children, especially in developing countries. Nonetheless, the encouragement and acceptance of practices like exclusive breastfeeding hold particular significance in impoverished developing nations marked by substantial disease prevalence and limited availability of clean water and proper sanitation facilities.

Breastfeeding has declined globally in recent years due to urbanization and mothers working outside the home. Research conducted in India has revealed a declining trend in breastfeeding practices, particularly in urban areas. Early initiation of breastfeeding is lacking in over 75% of children across the country, and exclusive breastfeeding is not observed in more than 50% of children. The notably low rates of early breastfeeding initiation in India are a matter of immediate concern. While various social, cultural, and religious beliefs influence breastfeeding practices, a mother's personal attitude towards breastfeeding has emerged as a stronger, independent predictor of breastfeeding initiation. Moreover, a positive maternal attitude towards breastfeeding is linked to extended breastfeeding duration and higher chances of successful breastfeeding. On the contrary, women's negative attitudes towards breastfeeding are considered to be the main obstacle to initiation and continuation of breastfeeding [21–24].

To ascertain the understanding and perspectives of first-time mothers regarding breastfeeding, we conducted a research study titled “Assessment of Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Breastfeeding in Primiparous Mothers.”

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- A study was conducted to evaluate the understanding of breastfeeding techniques and its significance among first-time mothers at specific hospitals in Wayanad.

OBJECTIVES

- A study was conducted to gauge the understanding of breastfeeding techniques and their significance among first-time mothers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The objective of this study was to evaluate breastfeeding knowledge among primiparous women admitted to antenatal ward and OPD department of DM WIMS Hospital, Wayanad.

This study employed a quantitative research approach, utilizing an experimental research design known as a “post-test only control design”. The target population of the study is the total number of mothers admitted to the antenatal ward and coming for consultation in the OPD.

The study was conducted on 07/08/2022 at the prenatal and OPD department of DM WIMS Hospital. According to the feasibility and requirements of 120 subjects, we selected samples from antenatal ward and OPD ward of DM WIMS Hospital. Data were collected from 120 samples; only women who were of a representative age are included in this study. During data collection, we obtained consent from the samples after explaining all the factors regarding the study. Samples were provided with a data collection tool to assess the knowledge regarding breastfeeding technique and its importance among primi mothers. The tool consists of 20 questions.

Data Collection Procedure

To determine the feasibility of the study, 120 Primi mothers were selected using purposive sampling technique. Written permission was obtained from the competent authority to conduct the study. After obtaining permission from the authority, the researcher introduced himself to the subjects and explained the study and its objectives. After the introduction, health education about breastfeeding was provided for 40 min, and then the posttest was administered. During the analysis of the study, it was found that 80.83% have average knowledge about breastfeeding. Following the health education program, there was a noteworthy enhancement in the subjects' knowledge level.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the samples were arranged and the percentage response value of each sample was calculated (Table 1 and Figure 1). We organized the answer into three categories, i.e.

1. Poor: 0–35%;
2. Average: 36–75%; and
3. Good: 76–100%.

RESULT

120 samples were selected for the study. The study was conducted among selected primi women who were admitted to DM WIMS hospital and OPD consultation department using convenience sampling. Study method was descriptive study. The instrument used for the study was a self-structured knowledge assessment questionnaire and consists of 20 questions. Data were examined through both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis methods.

Table 1. Data collected from the samples.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	3	2.5%
Average	97	80.83%
Good	20	16.6%

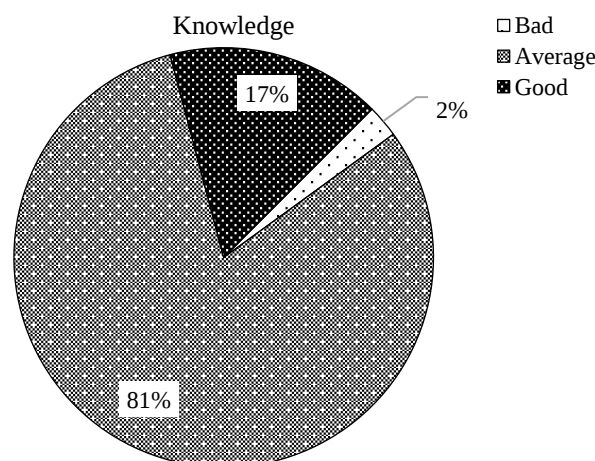


Figure 1. Graph showing data collected from samples.

1. When analyzing the knowledge scores of 120 samples, 2.5% of mothers have poor knowledge of breastfeeding, 80.83% of mothers have average knowledge of breastfeeding, and 16.6% of mothers have good knowledge.
2. Bad knowledge: 2.5%.
3. Average knowledge: 80.83%.
4. Good knowledge: 16.6%.

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted at DM WIMS Hospital in Wayanad, focusing on primiparous women who were both admitted to the hospital and those seeking consultation in the OPD department. A total of 120 participants were included in the study, and a purposive sampling method was employed to select these participants, ensuring that the sample represented the target population effectively [25–26].

To assess the knowledge of these primiparous mothers regarding breastfeeding, a self-structured questionnaire comprising 20 questions was administered. Each question had a correct answer, and participants were scored based on the number of correct responses. Correct answers were awarded 1 point, while incorrect responses received 0 points. This scoring system allowed for a quantitative assessment of breastfeeding knowledge.

The results of the knowledge assessment revealed interesting insights into the participants' levels of knowledge regarding breastfeeding. The knowledge levels were categorized into three groups: poor (0–35%), average (36–75%), and good (76–100%). These categories provided a clear representation of the distribution of knowledge within the study sample.

According to the findings, a small proportion of the primiparous mothers, specifically 2.5%, exhibited poor knowledge about breastfeeding. This finding suggests a concerning gap in understanding among this subset of participants. Poor knowledge about breastfeeding can have adverse implications for both maternal and infant health, as it may lead to suboptimal breastfeeding practices and outcomes. It is crucial to identify and provide targeted support and education to this group to bridge this knowledge gap.

On a more positive note, the majority of the participants, constituting 80.83%, fell into the category of average knowledge. While this group displayed a moderate level of knowledge about breastfeeding, there is still room for improvement. Efforts to enhance their knowledge and skills related to breastfeeding can contribute to better infant nutrition and health [27–29].

Furthermore, 16.6% of the primiparous mothers exhibited good knowledge about breastfeeding. This is an encouraging finding, as it suggests that a significant portion of the participants have a strong understanding of this essential aspect of maternal and child health. It is possible that these mothers have had access to effective prenatal education or support systems, which have contributed to their higher level of knowledge. In conclusion, the results of this study shed light on the varying levels of breastfeeding knowledge among primiparous mothers in the Wayanad region. The identification of mothers with poor knowledge underscores the need for targeted educational interventions and support programs. Additionally, efforts to further enhance the knowledge of mothers with average knowledge can lead to improved breastfeeding practices and outcomes. The group with good knowledge highlights the potential benefits of effective prenatal education and support systems in promoting maternal and infant well-being. Future research and initiatives should focus on addressing the specific knowledge gaps and needs identified in this study to ensure optimal breastfeeding practices and health outcomes for mothers and infants in this community [30].

CONCLUSION

This study was a qualitative study which was conducted on 120 samples of selected primi women who were admitted to DM WIMS Hospital and underwent OPD. Data were collected to determine first-

time mothers' knowledge about breastfeeding using a self-structured questionnaire consisting of 20 questions. Data were collected from primi mothers, and mothers were subsequently provided with health education regarding breastfeeding. When analyzing data from 120 samples, 2.5% of first-time mothers have poor knowledge about breastfeeding, 80.83% of mothers have average knowledge about breastfeeding, 16.6% of mothers have good knowledge about breastfeeding.

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