

A Study of Perception of Breast Feeding in Pregnant Females in Bharatpur Region

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Abstract

Background: The breast milk feeding should be started 30 minutes after the delivery and continued exclusively for the first six months. The best food for the newborn is the breast milk. It's the most essential diet which is much needed for the newborn's growth and survival. Its exclusive feeding is mandatory for the first 6 months and should be continued till 2 years of life with other diet after weaning. According to studies it was seen that child was around 10 times more at risk of death in the first month of life when compared to the child which was exclusively breast fed. This study puts in an effort to find the perception of breast-feeding pregnant females in Bharatpur region. **Aims and Objectives:** To study the perception of breast-feeding pregnant females in Bharatpur region. **Methods:** This study is a cross sectional study and a standard validated questionnaire was given to the subjects. The questionnaire was given in the local language and each and every question was read out and discussed with the subject so that she understands the question and answers exactly. **Results:** The perception of the pregnant mothers are very poor in this region. **Conclusion:** The perception can increase with proper education in our country. The poor socio-economic people should be targeted and properly educated.

Keywords: Perception, Breast Feeding, Bharatpur, Cross-Sectional Study.

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Introduction

The best food for the newborn is the breast milk[1]. It's the most essential diet which is much needed for the newborns growth and survival. Its exclusive feeding is mandatory for the first 6 months and should be continued till 2 years of life with other diet after weaning [2,3]. According to studies it was seen that child was around 10 times more at risk of death in the first month of life when compared to the child which was exclusively breast fed[4-6]. Colostrum which was thought to be bad has been exclusively studied and have been reported to enhance the immunological response towards the infections[7-9]. After all these studies the irony of the situation is that it's still not practiced and the World Health Organization recommends to increase the exclusive breast feeding[10,11]. Proper education to the mothers is important and it will actually help in decreasing the infant mortality[12]. The health workers who practice at the grass root level should educate these women. So this has been included even in the competency based Medical Education that has been implemented in our country[13,15]. This study puts in a sincere effort to find the perception of the breast feeding in pregnant females in Bharatpur region of Rajasthan.

Aims and objectives

To study the perception of breast-feeding pregnant females in Bharatpur region

Materials and methods

This study was done in the Department of Community Medicine, Government Medical College, Bharatpur, Rajasthan.

This study was done from April 2019 to March 2021.

The sample size for this study was 409 subjects. They were divided into two groups by the socio-economic group. The lower socio-economic group consisted on 221 subjects who were considered as group 1 and the others group belonged to higher socio economic group who were considered to be Group 2.

This study is a cross sectional study, and a standard validated questionnaire was given to the subjects. The questionnaire was given in the local language and each and every question was read out and discussed with the subject so that she understands the question and answers exactly.

Inclusion Criteria

- Pregnant females

Exclusion Criteria

- Subject who did not consent

Results

Table 1: Mean age of the subjects

Group	Total	Mean Age	Std deviation
1	221	21.65 years	±1.35 years
2	188	25.67 years	±2.64 years

Table 2: Perception in low socio-economic group

Sl No	Question	Answers	Lower socio-economic group	Higher socio-economic group	P value
1	Breast feeding should be started within half an hour	Yes	40	104	<0.001
		No	181	84	
2	Exclusive breast feeding should be continued for 6	Yes	49	118	<0.001
		No	172	70	

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months					
3	Colostrum should be discarded	Yes	43	121	<0.001
		No	178	67	
4	Breast feeding should be continued for 2 years	Yes	69	102	<0.001
		No	152	86	
5	Supplementary food can be started at 6 months	Yes	98	136	<0.001
		No	123	52	
6	Breast feeding has numerous benefits for the mother	Yes	147	124	>0.001
		No	74	64	
7	Knowledge in Breast feeding in special occasions	Yes	59	136	<0.001
		No	162	52	
8	Breast feeding protects infants from infection	Yes	170	112	>0.001
		No	51	76	
9	Breast milk is complete food	Yes	156	123	>0.001
		No	65	65	
10	Continuation of breast feeding if the child is ill	Yes	27	126	<0.001
		No	194	62	

Discussion

It is a known fact scientifically that breast feeding should be started within 30 minutes after delivery and should be exclusively breast feed for the first six months. Then the process of weaning should start, and the breast feeding should be continued for at least two years. This ensures the proper growth of the body and also gives the baby an opportunity to thrive. The baby's survival depends on these simple things that have to be followed. But this is not being followed in our country and this is very unfortunate. The biggest problem is the lack of knowledge. The mother simply doesn't know these simple set of rules that has to be followed and the reason behind these to be followed. Health workers at the grass root level should make a sincere effort to make the pregnant mothers understand the benefits. This will go a long way to help the mothers and child's health.

There are some special circumstances also where the mother has to be educated. Some situations like the benefits of breast feeding have to be made understood. The breast-feeding education should include the fact that it should be continued even if the baby is having diarrhea, fever, cough etc. Special situations like some infections and drugs that can be transmitted from the mother to child through breast feeding should be educated. Breastfeeding is beneficial and life saving for the babies in countries with poor socioeconomic environment, so health workers knowledge has to be improved.

Conclusion

The perception of the pregnant females was extremely low. The perception can increase with proper education in our country. The poor socio-economic people should be targeted and properly educated. The benefit that happens to the child and the mother has to be told to the pregnant mothers. This simple step can really make a difference to a developing country like ours. The mortality can significantly be reduced by this simple step.

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