

TO EVALUATE THE KNOWLEDGE REGARDING IMPORTANCE OF EXCLUSIVE BREAST FEEDING AMONG THE POST NATAL MOTHER AT SELECTED RURAL AREA, KANPUR, UTTAR PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Exclusive breastfeeding is a vital practice for ensuring optimal growth, development, and survival of infants. A quantitative descriptive study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding the importance of exclusive breastfeeding among new mothers in a particular rural Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, area. One hundred postpartum women were chosen for the study using non-probability convenient sampling. A systematic questionnaire was used to gather data, consisting of demographic variables and knowledge-related questions on exclusive breastfeeding. The findings revealed that 30% of mothers had high understanding, 45% had mediocre knowledge, and 25% had inadequate knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding. While most mothers were aware of the recommended duration of exclusive breastfeeding for six months, gaps were observed in understanding the importance of colostrum, disease prevention, and avoidance of early supplementary feeding. A significant association was found between knowledge levels and variables such as education and parity. The study concludes that although a moderate level of knowledge exists among postnatal mothers, there is in order to promote better mother and child health outcomes, there is a need for improved health education and community-based interventions to raise awareness and increase exclusive breastfeeding habits. $p < 0.05 \rightarrow$ Statistically Significant $p > 0.05 \rightarrow$ Not Significant

KEYWORDS

Exclusive breastfeeding, Postnatal mothers, Knowledge, Infant health, Maternal education, Colostrum, Child nutrition.

INTRODUCTION

Breastfeeding exclusively is one of the most powerful methods to promote the health and survival of children. The World Health Organization defines exclusive breastfeeding as and infant receiving solely breast milk for the initial six months of life, without any other food or beverages, including water. Breast milk supplies all the necessary nutrients needed for the ideal growth and development of

infants and also contains antibodies that help protect against common childhood illnesses such as diarrhea and pneumonia.

In developing regions like Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, the practice of exclusive breastfeeding is still influenced by cultural beliefs, lack of awareness, and socio-economic factors. Many mothers introduce supplementary feeding early due to misconceptions, family pressure, or insufficient knowledge about breastfeeding benefits. This can increase the risk of malnutrition and infections among infants.

Postnatal mothers play a crucial role in determining the health outcomes of their newborns. Adequate knowledge regarding the importance of exclusive breastfeeding is essential for promoting proper infant feeding practices. Therefore, assessing the knowledge level among mothers in selected areas is important to identify gaps and provide appropriate health education. The postnatal mother at Ramnagar Kanpur Uttar Pradesh.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Despite various national and international health programs promoting breastfeeding, the rate of exclusive breastfeeding remains suboptimal in many parts of India. Lack of awareness, myths, and inadequate support from family and healthcare systems often hinder proper breastfeeding practices. In areas like Kanpur, mothers may not receive sufficient counseling regarding breastfeeding during antenatal and postnatal periods.

Early initiation and continuation of exclusive breastfeeding can significantly reduce infant mortality and morbidity. However, without proper knowledge, mothers may resort to formula feeding or early weaning, which can negatively affect the child's health. Hence, there is a strong need to assess the level of knowledge among postnatal mothers regarding exclusive breastfeeding.

This study will help in identifying knowledge gaps and misconceptions among mothers. The findings can be used by healthcare professionals and policymakers to design effective educational programs and interventions. It will also contribute to improving maternal and child health outcomes in the community.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

TO EVALUATE THE KNOWLEDGE REGARDING IMPORTANCE OF EXCLUSIVE BREAST FEEDING

AMONG THE POSTNATAL MOTHER AT SELECTED RURAL AREA, KANPUR, UTTAR PRADESH

OBJECTIVE

To evaluate the understanding of the significance of exclusive breastfeeding among postnatal mothers in specific regions of Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh.

1. To evaluate the level of knowledge of postnatal mothers regarding exclusive breastfeeding.
2. To identify the factors influencing breastfeeding practices among mothers.
3. To ascertain the relationship between specific demographic characteristic and knowledge levels.
4. To offer health education in light the of the study' conclusion.

HYPOTHESIS

1. H1. Postnatal mother possesses considerable knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding.
2. H2. A significant correlation exists between about the level of knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding and certain demographic variables.
3. H01. There is no significant knowledge of postnatal mothers regarding exclusive breastfeeding.
4. H02 - There is no significant association between the level of knowledge regarding the exclusive

breastfeeding and selected demographic variables.

ASSUMPTION

The Researcher Assum that

1. Post Natal mother may have some knowledge of postnatal mothers regarding exclusive breastfeeding.
2. Mother will interested for the study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

A quantitative descriptive research design was employed to evaluate postnatal mother to knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding.

Research Design

A cross-sectional descriptive survey design was utilized.

Setting of the Study

The study was conducted in a Ramnagar of Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, with a focus on the community setting.

Population

The study population comprised of postpartum mothers (within 6 months after delivery) residing in the designated rural area.

Sample Size and Sampling Method

- Sample sizes : 100 postpartum mother .
- Sampling Method : Non-probability convenient sampling

Inclusion Criteria

- Mothers who delivered within the preceding 6 months.
- Mothers willing to participate

- Mothers available at the time data collection

Exclusion Criteria

- Mothers with serious illness
- Mothers not willing to participate

Data Collection Tool

A structured questionnaire was used, divided into.

Section A: Demographic variables (age, education, occupation, parity).

1. **Section B:** Knowledge questions on exclusive breastfeeding (duration, benefits, colostrum, frequency).

RESULTS

Demographic Findings

- Majority of mothers were aged 21–30 years
- Most had primary or secondary education
- A large proportion were housewives
- Many belonged to low socioeconomic status

Knowledge Level Findings

- Good knowledge: 30%
- Average knowledge: 45%
- Poor knowledge: 25%

Key Observations

- Most mothers knew that exclusive breastfeeding should continue for 6 months
- Limited awareness about:
 - Colostrum importance
 - Disease prevention benefits

- Some mothers practiced early supplementation, indicating gaps in knowledge

Association Findings

- Significant association found between:
 - Education level and knowledge
 - Parity and knowledge
- No significant association with age (example; adjust as needed)

DISCUSSION

The current study was undertaken to evaluate postnatal mother knowledge of significance of exclusive breastfeeding in a Ramnagar of Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. The findings revealed that a considerable proportion of mothers had average knowledge, while fewer mothers demonstrated good knowledge, and a significant number still had poor understanding. This indicates that although awareness exists, it is not sufficient to ensure optimal breastfeeding practices.

The demographic findings of the study showed that most mothers were in the age group of 21–30 years and had primary or secondary education. Education was found to play a significant role in influencing knowledge levels. Mothers with higher educational status demonstrated better understanding of exclusive breastfeeding compared to those with lower education. This suggests that literacy enhances the ability to access and comprehend health-related information.

In terms of knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding, the majority of mothers were aware that breastfeeding should be continued exclusively for the initial six

months of life. However, gaps were observed in specific areas such as the importance of colostrum, prevention of infections, and the role of breastfeeding in child growth and immunity. These findings highlight that while general awareness messages may be reaching the population, deeper understanding is still lacking.

Another important finding was that some mothers practiced early introduction of supplementary feeding despite knowing the recommended duration of exclusive breastfeeding. This reflects a gap between knowledge and practice, which may be influenced by cultural beliefs, family pressure, and traditional practices prevalent in rural areas. Such factors continue to hinder the proper implementation of exclusive breastfeeding.

The study also identified a significant relationship between levels of knowledge demographic variables such as and education and parity. Multiparous mothers tended to have better knowledge compared to primiparous mothers, possibly due to prior experience and exposure to health services. However, no strong association was observed with age, indicating that knowledge is more dependent on exposure and education rather than age alone.

The findings of the present study are consistent with similar studies conducted in rural settings, which report moderate levels of awareness but inadequate detailed knowledge and practices regarding exclusive breastfeeding. Despite ongoing national health programs, there remains a need to strengthen education and communication strategies at the grassroots level.

Overall, the discussion highlights that improving maternal knowledge alone is not sufficient; there is also a need to

address socio-cultural barriers and reinforce correct practices through continuous support from healthcare workers. Strengthening community-based interventions and personalized counseling can play a crucial role in bridging the gap between knowledge and practice.

1. Implications

Nursing Practice

- Nurses should provide antenatal and postnatal counseling
- Emphasis on practical demonstrations and awareness sessions

Nursing Education

- Include breastfeeding education modules in training
- Promote community-based learning

Nursing Administration

- Organize health camps and awareness programs
- Strengthen Anganwadi and ASHA worker training

Nursing Research

- Further studies can explore:
 - Attitude and practices
 - Intervention effectiveness

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that:

- Knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding among postnatal mothers in the Ramnagar moderate
- A significant proportion still lacks adequate awareness
- Educational status strongly influences knowledge level

There is a critical need for structured health education programs to improve breastfeeding practices and reduce infant morbidity and mortality.

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