**A Study to Assess the Knowledge regarding breast feeding among pregnant mothers at PHC, Radhapuram, Villupuram.**

**M.Porselvi1, R.Pramila2, V.Sasi kala3,**

1M.Sc.Nursing, Ph.D scholar, Professor & Principal, Dept of OBG, E.S College of Nursing, Villupuram, Tamil Nadu.

2M.Sc.Nursing, Nursing tutor, Dept of OBG, E.S College of Nursing, Villupuram, Tamil Nadu.3M.Sc.Nursing, Nursing tutor, Dept of OBG, E.S College of Nursing, Villupuram, Tamil Nadu.

**ABSTRACT:**

**Background:** Human milk is the ideal nourishment for infants’ survival, growth, and development. Breast milk contains all the nutrients an infant needs in the first six months of life. Exclusive breast feeding means that the infant receives only breast milk. It offers infants and young children complete nutrition, early protection against illness and promote growth and development of the baby. Early initiation of breast feeding lowers the mother’s risk of postpartum haemorrhage and anaemia. **Aim:** The aim of the study was to assess the Knowledge regarding breast feeding among pregnant mothers at PHC. **Objectives:** 1.To assess the knowledge level of pregnant mothers on breast feeding. 2. To find out association between level of knowledge among pregnant mothers with their selected socio demographic variables. **Methodology:** 50 pregnant mothers attending PHC, Radhapuram were selected by using non-probability purposive sampling technique. **Results:** Regarding the level of knowledge among pregnant mothers, 41 (82%) had adequate knowledge, 5(10%) had moderate knowledge and 4(8%) had inadequate knowledge regarding breast feeding. The mean knowledge score of pregnant mothers was 11.44 and standard deviation was 6.5. **Conclusion:** The study result showed that majority of the pregnant mothers (82%) had adequate knowledge towards breast feeding.

**Keywords: Assess, Knowledge, breast feeding, pregnant mothers.**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Human milk is the ideal nourishment for infants’ survival, growth, and development. Breast milk contains all the nutrients an infant needs in the first six months of life. Exclusive breast feeding means that the infant receives only breast milk.

It offers infants and young children complete nutrition, early protection against illness and promote growth and development of the baby. Early initiation of breast feeding lowers the mother’s risk of postpartum haemorrhage and anaemia. The beneficial effect of breastfeeding depends on breastfeeding initiation, its duration, and age at which the breast-fed child is weaned. Breastfeeding practices vary among different regions and communities. In India breastfeeding practices are influenced by rural and urban residence, cultural, socio-economic factors, psychological status, religious value and literacy especially low level of mother’s education, mother’s employment.

As per WHO’s recommendation breast milk alone is sufficient to meet the infant’s nutritional requirements for the first 6 months of life. The world health organization recommends that breastfeeding be initiated within 1hr of birth. Early initiation of breastfeeding provides benefits for both mother and the baby. The baby friendly hospital initiative (BFHI) was designed to promote early initiation of breastfeeding preferably immediately after the birth.

WHO recommends exclusive breast feeding (EBF) for the first six months of life while it is advised to provide adequate and safe complementary foods with breast feeding for up to two years and beyond. As per WHO, breastfed children are more intellectual and fit. Furthermore, their chances of being overweight, obese, and prone to diabetes are comparatively lesser than the ones who aren’t. Breast milk is the best food for newborn babies as it contains antibodies that aid in preventing several prevalent paediatric ailments.

 Globally, a minority of infants and children meet these recommendations: Only 44% of infants initiate breastfeeding within the 1st h after birth and 40% of all infants under 6 months of age are exclusively breastfed. At 2 years of age, 45% of children are still breast feeding (World Health Organization, 2020).

**NEED FOR THE STUDY:**

According to the WHO estimate, increased breastfeeding could avert 20, 000 maternal deaths each year due to breast cancer. Therefore, it is necessary to promote the importance of more family-friendly policies to protect and support breastfeeding. Mothers should be subjected to counselling, so that the practice of breastfeeding should be inculcated right from the beginning.”

As per the WHO reports, 2 out of 3 children are not breastfed. Therefore, it makes it all the more crucial to mark this day. Mothers are recommended to breastfeed their children for 6 months post birth. The world health organization (WHO) recommends exclusive breast feeding (EBF) for the first six months of life while it is advised to provide adequate and safe complementary foods with breast feeding for up to two years and beyond. EBF remains uncommon in most countries (both developed and developing), even in countries with high rates of breast feeding initiation. EBF rates in infants less than six months of age varied from as low as 20% in central and eastern European countries to 44% in south Asia.

In Africa, more than 95% of infants are currently breastfed, but feeding practices are often inadequate; feeding water and other liquids to breastfed infants is a widespread practice [5]. The risk of morbidity is reduced by close to 70% when a child is exclusively breastfed. Exclusive breast feeding protected against serious morbidities in the first six months of life [6]. Research conducted at Ibadan, Nigeria, revealed that prevalence of mothers’ knowledge towards EBF is still low, which accounts for about 36.2% and the same thing is true in Ethiopia, where it accounts for about 34.7%. Even though many researches are done about mother’s knowledge and attitude towards exclusive breast feeding in many areas of Ethiopia, no research is done about it in and around Dabat Health Center. Due to this fact, this research is initiated and conducted, with the objective of assessing the knowledge and attitude towards exclusive breast feeding among mothers attending antenatal care and immunization clinic in Dabat Health Center, North Gondar zone, Northwest Ethiopia.

 A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 120 pregnant women from four primary health-care centres in Erbil City/Iraqi Kurdistan . A structured questionnaire was developed and face to face interview technique was used for data collection. Overall, 61.7% of mothers had a poor level of knowledge of breastfeeding despite having a positive attitude (96.7%). There was a significant association between mothers’ knowledge and mothers’ education level, age, occupation, and type of family. A significant number of pregnant mothers had not sufficient knowledge that indicating the necessity of interventional programs by the health system.(**Hamdia M. Ahmed, Safyia S. Piro et al., Polytechnic Journal. 2019. 9(2): 55-62).**

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

A Study to Assess the Knowledge Regarding breast feeding among pregnant mothers at PHC, Radhapuram, Villupuram.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

1. To assess the knowledge level of pregnant mothers on breast feeding.
2. To find out association between level of knowledge among pregnant mothers and with their selected socio demographic variables.

**DELIMITATIONS:**

**The study is delimited to;**

* Pregnant mothers attending PHC, Radhapuram.
* Both Primi and multigravida.
* Who are willing to participate

**METHODOLOGY:**

**Research Approach:** Quantitative approach.

**Research Design:** Descriptive design

**Setting:** The study was carried out at PHC, Radhapuram.

**Population:**

**Target population:** All pregnant mothers.

**Accessible population:** Pregnantmothers attending PHC, Radhapuram.

**Sample:** Pregnant mothers attending selected PHC and who fulfilled the inclusion criteria.

**Sample size:** The sample size selected for the present study includes 50 pregnant mothers.

**Sampling technique:** Non-probability purposive sampling technique was adopted to the selected samples.

**Variables:**

**Independent variable:** Pregnant mothers.

**Dependent variable:** Level of knowledge.

 **Sampling criteria**

**Inclusion criteria:**

* Pregnant mothers attending selected PHC.
* Willing to participate in the study.
* Available during the period of data collection.

**Exclusion criteria:**

* Pregnant mothers who are not available at the time of data collection.
* Pregnant mothers admitted for serious illness.
* Those who are not willing to participate in the study.

**Description of the tool:**

* **Part-I:** Demographic data consisting of items age, gravida, trimester, education, occupation, type of family, religion, FMI and source of information.
* **Part-B:** Self structured questionnaire to assess the knowledge on breastfeeding among pregnant mothers. It has 15 MCQ questions.

**ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION:**

1. **Findings of demographic characteristics:**

Regarding demographic variables, 94% of pregnant mothers were in the age group of 20-29 yrs, 38% of pregnant mothers were completed higher education, 76% pregnant mothers were housewives, 90%of them were Hindus, 50% of them earns 15,000-20,000 per month, 48% of them living in joint family, 60% of them were multi gravida and 55% them were in first trimester, 58% of mother’s source of knowledge was friends and family.

**Table-1: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of knowledge among pregnant mothers. (N=50)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level of knowledge** | **F** | **P** |
| Adequate  | 41 | 82 |
| Moderately adequate  | 5 | 10 |
| Inadequate  | 4 | 8 |

**Fig-1: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of knowledge among pregnant mothers.**

**Table-2: Frequency and percentage distribution of Mean and Standard deviation of knowledge. (N=50)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **MEAN** | **SD** |
| Level of knowledge | 11.44 | 6.5 |

 **MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:**

* + Regarding the level of knowledge among pregnant mothers, 41 (82%) had adequate knowledge, 5(10%) had moderate knowledge and 4(8%) had inadequate knowledge regarding breast feeding.
	+ The mean knowledge score of pregnant mothers was 11.44 and standard deviation was 6.5
	+ There was a significant association found between level of knowledge and demographic variables such as age, religion, occupation, type of family and source of information at P<0.05 level.

**CONCLUSION:**

The study result showed that majority of the pregnant mothers had adequate knowledge (82%) towards breast feeding. Hence it can be concluded that, due to availability and accessibility of good family welfare services and health education, mothers had an adequate knowledge on breast feeding. Still they need to be constantly educated about the benefits of breastfeeding during screening and antenatal care for successful breast feeding. And health care workers who work in the areas of MCH clinic are better to give appropriate information about EBF to mothers who follow ANC and for those who come to immunization.

**REFERENCES:**

* World health organization (WHO), Exclusive breast feeding; <http://www.who.int/Elena/titles/exclusive_breastfeedig/en/>.
* Mise PJ, Mise AJ, Mise SJ, Siddappa M. Study of breastfeeding practices and problems among postnatal mothers: a hospital based study. Int J Reprod Contracept Obstet Gynecol 2017;6:3343-3346.
* World health organization (WHO), Exclusive breast feeding; <http://www.who.int/Elena/titles/exclusive_breastfeedig/en/>.
* WHO, The optimal duration of exclusive breastfeeding:. Department of nutrition for health and development and department of child and adolescent health and development; 2021.
* A. Imdad, M. Y. Yakoob, and Z. A. Bhutta, “Effect of breastfeeding promotion interventions on breastfeeding rates, with special focus on developing countries,” *BMC Public Health*, vol. 11, no. 3, article S24, 2021. View at: [Publisher Site](https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-11-S3-S24) | [Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=Effect%20of%20breastfeeding%20promotion%20interventions%20on%20breastfeeding%20rates,%20with%20special%20focus%20on%20developing%20countries&author=A.%20Imdad,%20M.%20Y.%20Yakoob,%20and%20Z.%20A.%20Bhutta&publication_year=2011).
* N. Tadele and F. Habta, “Knowledge, Attitude and Practice towards Exclusive Breastfeeding among Lactating Mothers, Mizan Aman Town, Southwestern Ethiopia: Descriptive Cross Sectional Study,” *Journal of Health Education Research & Development*, vol. 03, no. 03, 2015.