Current study was done with the objectives (1) To estimate prevalent practices regarding breastfeeding & the current status of knowledge amongst mothers of children aging between 0-9 months, regarding breast feeding, (2) To identify factors influencing breast feeding.
INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING: KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICES AND FACTORS INFLUENCING BREASTFEEDING IN MOTHERS IN ALWAR CITY, RAJASTHAN

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Roles of various authors:
Dr. Suman Singh: Development of protocol, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of data and write up of transcript
Dr. D.C. Jain: Guided in protocol development, field study, data management and write up of transcript.

ABSTRACT

Background & Objectives: Current study was done with the objectives (1) To estimate prevalent practices regarding breastfeeding & the current status of knowledge amongst mothers of children aging between 0-9 months, regarding breast feeding, (2) To identify factors influencing breast feeding.

Methods: A house to house survey was done from 9th to 21st April 2007, amongst on 82 mothers of children aging up to 9 months from three randomly selected wards of Alwar city. In addition to this 30 newborns up to the age of 48 hrs, born in Dist. Hospital Alwar, were also studied for a period of one week to know initiation of breast feeding within 24 hrs.

Results: Exclusive breast feeding rate up to 4 month and up to six month was observed in 48.6% and 38.8% respectively. Prelacteal feed was administered in 68.29 % children and Initiation of breast feeding within 1hr of birth was observed in 16.6 % newborns.

Key words: Alwar, Breast feeding, Exclusive breastfeeding

Introduction

Early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life –lay down the best possible foundation for start of life. The WHO also urges member states to support exclusive breastfeeding for first six months (1). Breastfeeding not only nourishes the child but also help in development of a strong bond between mother and child. Special fatty acids in the breast milk help in increasing intelligence quotients (IQs) and better visual acuity (2).

In India, according to NFHS-3 exclusive breastfeeding rate is 46% (3). Breastfeeding is important, particularly in developing countries like India where infant mortality and population growth are major health concerns for Govt. of India. Although breastfeeding is
still universal in India there are some indications that this trend is declining especially in urban educated population (4).

Objectives:
To estimate prevalent practices & the current status of knowledge regarding breastfeeding amongst mothers of children aging between 0-9 months. (2) To identify factors influencing breast feeding.

Methodology:
A house to house survey was done from 9th to 21st April 2007, amongst 82 mothers of children aging up to 9 months from three randomly selected wards of Alwar city. In addition to this 30 newborns up to the age of 48 hrs, born in Dist. Hospital Alwar, were also studied for a period of one week to know initiation of breast feeding within 24 hrs, considering the recall period of 24 hrs. Exclusive breast feeding referred to receiving only breast milk from his /her mother or expressed breast milk, and no other liquids or solids with the exception of drops or syrups consisting of vitamins, mineral supplements or medicines while breastfeeding referred to only receiving breast milk (direct from the breast or expressed).

Results:
Amongst all 40.24% mothers were found illiterate. Only 9.75% mothers were educated up to graduation or post graduation level. Most of the women (71%) of the mothers were belonging to family whose total income was less than 5000 Rs monthly.

a) Initiation of breastfeeding within 1hr:

Only 16.6 % newborns were breastfed within 1 hr of birth. 77% of newborns were put on breast milk in later hrs of the same day.

b) Pre-lacteal feeding:

Amongst all children observed, 68.29 % were given pre-lacteal feed. Water sugar solution was the predominant pre lacteal feed used. We did not find its association with place of delivery as it was found common among hospital deliveries too.

c) discarding of colostrums:

In present study acceptance of colostrums was found 100%.

d) Exclusive breastfeeding rate:

Out of total 82 mothers 72 mothers were analyzed for exclusive breast feeding up to six months as 10 mothers were having children less than 4 month of age. Total 48.6 % mothers exclusively breastfed their child up to 4 month and 38.8 % mothers exclusively breastfed their child up to six months (Table-1).
Table: 1 Exclusive breastfeeding up to 4 month & 6 months, among mothers of children up to 9 months of age, Alwar city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exclusive breast feed</th>
<th>No of mothers</th>
<th>Percentage of mothers (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 4 months</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 6 months</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not exclusively fed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e) Mothers knowledge regarding duration of breastfeeding:

Out of total studied mothers 34.1 % said that correct age up to which they should breast feed their child is 2 year which is correct age and 32.91 % mothers said up to age of 1 year.

f) Mother’s knowledge regarding benefits of breast feeding:

All mothers said that breast milk is better than commercially available infant formula milk because it is cheap and covered. Only 50 % mothers said that it protects against common respiratory diseases and diarrheas and 11% mothers stated about its contraceptive property.

g) Practices regarding frequency of breastfeeding:

Majority of women (79.68%) breast fed their child on demand and 15.62% approximately 7-8 times in a day. Episodes during night on an average were two to three times.

h) Perceptions among mothers for non-breastfeeding their children:

Out of 82 mothers 16 (19.51 %) were found non-breastfeeding. Majority of mothers (31.25%) felt that milk is not sufficient enough to satisfy their child. Pregnancy was another main reason (25%). One mother said that her milk does not suit to baby constituting 6.25%.

i) Factors affecting Exclusive breastfeeding:

I. Educational status:

Percentage of mothers who exclusively breastfed their child up to six month was found higher among illiterate mothers (46.6%) than mothers with higher education 39.39%.

II. Family Income:

The proportion of mothers who exclusively breast fed their child up to six months was higher among mothers whose family income was less than Rs 5000 monthly (44.68%). Only 20% mothers exclusively breastfed their child belonging to family having monthly income more than Rs.10, 000.

III. Multiple child birth:
Only 2 mothers were found who has delivered twins. Out of which one mother exclusively breastfed only up to 4 month and other mother breast-fed only up to 1 month. Reason being is that mothers feel that milk would not be sufficient enough to satisfy their infants.

IV. Working status of mother:

Total 3 mothers were found working out of which no mother (0%) did exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 month, 2 mothers (66.6%) did up to 4 month and 1(33.3%) did not practiced exclusive breastfeeding.

V. Birth spacing:

Total 20 mothers were found in which there was no proper birth spacing. Out of which 50% breast- fed up to 4 month, 35% breast- fed up to 6 month and 15% did not exclusively breast-fed.

VI. Sex discrimination in relation with breastfeeding:

Out of total 40 mothers who were having two or more children 36 mothers were analyzed for sex discrimination in relation with exclusive breast feeding, because 4 mothers were either having all female or male children. Out of all analyzed mothers 25% mothers did not breastfeed their male and female children for the equal period. Reason being either they conceived during breast-feeding or there was no proper spacing between childbirths.

Table: 2 Perceptions among mothers of children up to age of 9 month (Alwar city), for non-breastfeeding their children-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>No. Of mothers</th>
<th>Percentage of mothers (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk not sufficient</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby left itself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health problem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working mother</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nipple problem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False perception about her self’s breast milk.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouraged by family member</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion:

Rajasthan is the state where infant mortality is higher than India. As per annual report 2011-12 by MOHFW, mortality in Rajasthan (55) is higher than National level i.e. 47 per thousand. Breast feeding can prove cost-effective tool to bring down IMR. Exclusive breastfeeding up to 4 month and six month was observed 48.6% and 39% respectively which is slightly higher than observed in NFHS-3 in urban population (33.2%).

While it is highly desirable that infant should begin to be breast feed as soon as possible, preferably 1st hr of birth, whereas it was found only in 16.6% infants. Most of the children (76.6%) were put on breast feeding on the same day. Results are comparable with NFHS-2 (15.5%) and slightly lower than NFHS-III (23.5) for Rajasthan State. We did not found any evidence of rejection of colostrums, which is in agreement with 71-100% reported acceptance in literature.

Only 68.29 % mothers gave prelacteal feed, which is higher than observed in NFHS-III (Rajasthan fact sheet). Exclusive breastfeeding as shown by other studies also were practiced more by illiterate mothers i.e. 46.66 % than those with higher education 25%. Children belonging to families with lower income (44.68%) were more likely to be exclusively breast fed as compared to those belonging to families with higher income 20 %

Twin pregnancy and working status of mother affect duration of breastfeeding. Poor birth spacing was also observed affecting duration of breastfeeding because; if the younger child is suckling the elder one is put on complimentary feeding at an early age. Main reason observed for starting topped milk was that 31.21 % mothers felt that her milk is not sufficient for their child. Other barrier in breast feeding observed was pregnancy (25%).

Only 32.91 % mothers could tell the correct age of breastfeeding i.e. 2 years. Almost every mother enumerated beneficial nature of breast milk, 50% mentioned about its antibody properties. Very few (10%) could tell about its contraceptive properties and its benefits to the mother.

Mother’s practices regarding frequency of breastfeeding were, on demand feeding (79.68%). “According to National guidelines on infant and young child feeding” even if child is feeding on demand, constitutes about 8-10 times a day is sufficient enough to full fill the needs of a child. No lady said that she will stop breastfeeding during illness.

Conclusion:

To conclude, exclusive breastfeeding has to be promoted by educating mothers during pregnancy and lactation.

Recommendations:

Along with intensive IEC, since decreasing trend of breastfeeding is observed in educated and women with higher socio-economic status sensitization of adolescent and young girls regarding infant feeding practices may be done at school and college level.
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3. National Family Health Survey 3. Health


5. MOHFW. Annual report to the people of India. MOHFW, GOI. Dec. 2011