



Original Article

Awareness Regarding Colostrum Feeding Among Nursing Females

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ABSTRACT

The significance of colostrum in promoting infant growth and development and fighting infections is widely recognized, but its acceptance and feeding frequency vary across different ethnicities across Pakistan. **Objective:** To assess the awareness of females regarding colostrum feeding and breast feeding. **Methods:** Location of the study was Sheikh Zaid Hospital Rahim Yar Khan. Sample size was 100 and was calculated using non-probability convenient sampling technique. A questionnaire was used to obtain data from females that visited the hospital. **Results:** The findings indicated that 79 of the 100 women had knowledge of breastfeeding, whereas 21 did not. Only 33 women immediately began breastfeeding after giving birth, as opposed to 67 who did not. The research also showed that just 10 women thought of colostrum as a comprehensive source of nutrients, whereas the other 90 did not. **Conclusions:** Based on these results, it can be concluded that there is a need to improve the knowledge, attitude, and practice of colostrum feeding among mothers, as many of them are unaware of its importance and the need for initiating breastfeeding soon after delivery.

INTRODUCTION

The reproductive process includes both pregnancy and breast-feeding in all mammalian species, in the absence of the latter, none of these animals could have survived including man [1]. The value of breast-feeding in low and middle-income countries is well known, but in high-income countries, there is less certainty about its significance. Only 37 percent of children under the age of 6 months are breastfed in low and middle income countries alone. In few exceptions, breast-feeding periods in high-income countries are shorter than in resource-poor ones [2]. For most kids human milk is the perfect diet. Breastfeeding helps both mothers and children. Breast-fed babies get breast milk antibodies that protect against early postpartum infection, and breast-fed is cheaper than baby

formula [3]. Breast-feeding improves all children's freedom, health and development. This saves the lives of women, and adds to human resources [4]. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) underlines the pediatrician's essential role in promoting, securing, and supporting breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is defined as the best way to feed babies, and is the primary means of ensuring optimal health, growth and development of infants and children [5]. The AAP has published a breast-feeding plan with recommended breast-feeding practices and recommendations that pediatricians should adopt. The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) advises that all children be breastfed and/or receive processed human milk solely for the first 6 months of their lives, with

minor exceptions [6]. The first milk generated by a mammal's mammary glands occurs in the latter stages of pregnancy, soon before giving birth, and continues through the first several weeks of nursing [7]. Although colostrum has less lipids and potassium than regular milk, it is much richer in proteins, carbs, vitamin A, and salt chloride. Because of their immature digestive systems, newborns benefit from colostrums' concentrated, low-volume type of nutrition delivery. Meconium, a baby's first faeces, is more likely to pass because to the laxative properties of colostrum. This helps to avoid jaundice by removing extra bilirubin, which is generated in significant amounts during birth. IgA (reactive to *Escherichia coli* virulence related proteins), IgG, and IgM3 are just a few of the immunoglobulins present [8]. Lysozyme, lactoferrin, complement, and proline-rich peptide (PRP) and lactoperoxidase are other immunological components of colostrum [9]. Additionally, it includes a number of cytokines and growth factors. PRP aids in the battle against a variety of viral and bacterial infections that are challenging to cure, as well as numerous cancers, autoimmune illnesses, allergies, and asthma. It aids in lowering one of the major killers in our nation, along with diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections [10]. Despite the fact that breastfeeding is advised by all significant health organisations, rates have remained below average because some women still have difficulty achieving their nursing objectives. The importance of breastfeeding is underestimated. Children are deprived of their fundamental right to breastmilk and colostrum because of uninformed parents and unhealthy nursing practices. In light of this, the purpose of this study was to assess females' knowledge about breastfeeding and colostrum.

METHODS

To determine the knowledge of breast feeding soon after delivery and the benefits of colostrum among women attending Sheikh Zaid hospital Rahim Yar Khan were enrolled for the study. With a sample size of 100, non-probability convenient sampling was used in this cross-sectional investigation. Nursing women visiting Sheikh Zaid hospital Rahim Yar Khan were included in the inclusion criteria and women from other hospitals and non-cooperative women were added in the exclusion criteria. The rules and regulations set by the ethical committee of The University of Lahore were followed while conducting the research and the rights of the research participants were respected. After taking informed written consent, data was collected by the researcher with the help of data collection tool (questionnaire/ Performa) and according to the variables of the questionnaire. Data were tabulated and analyzed with the help of SPSS version 21.0 and reported using descriptive and inferential statistics. The

quantitative variables like age, income, etc. were assessed by using mean and standard deviation and were reported using percentages and frequencies. The study duration was 4 months.

RESULTS

Out of 100 women, 15 were literate and 85 were illiterate, 83 were housewives while 17 were working ladies. 79 of the husbands were educated whereas 21 were not. 36 of them had government jobs, 60 of them had private jobs and 4 were unemployed. The income of 56 patients was 10,000-25,000 and 41 was 26,000-50,000 and 3 of them had above 50,000. 64 were from urban areas and 36 were from rural areas. 42 patients were from lower class and 58 patients were from middle class. 63 patients had their own house whereas 37 lived in rented house as represented in Table 1.

Patient's Education	
Literate	15
Illiterate	85
Total	100
Women's Occupation	
Housewife	83
Working Lady	17
Total	100
Husband's Education	
Educated	79
Uneducated	21
Total	100
Husband's Occupation	
Government Job	36
Private Job	60
Unemployed	4
Total	100
Income	
Below 10,000	0
10,000-25,000	5
26,000-50,000	64
Above 50,000	13
Total	100
Geographical Location	
Urban	64
Rural	36
Total	100
Socioeconomic status	
Lower class	42
Middle class	58
Total	100
Residential status	
Own	63
Rented	37
Total	100

Table 1: Socio Demographic characterization

79 of the women had knowledge about breastfeeding and 21 didn't have any knowledge as shown in the Figure 2.

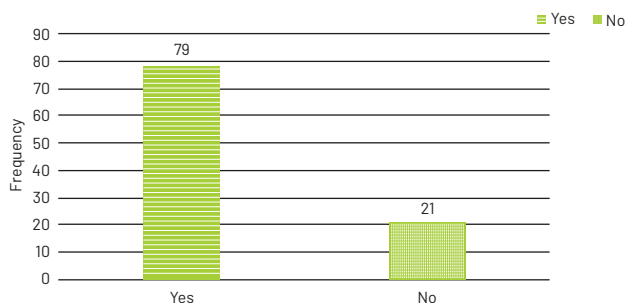


Figure 2: Frequency Distribution of Knowledge about breastfeeding

The results in Figure 3 represents that only 33 women initiated breastfeeding immediately after birth whereas 67 women didn't.

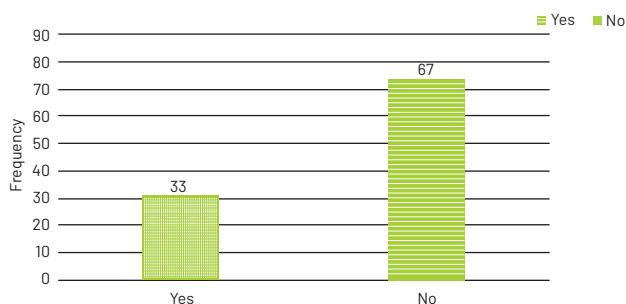


Figure 3: Frequency Distribution of initiating breastfeeding immediately after birth

The results depicts that only 10 women considered colostrum as a whole nutritious milk whereas 90 women didn't as shown in figure 4.

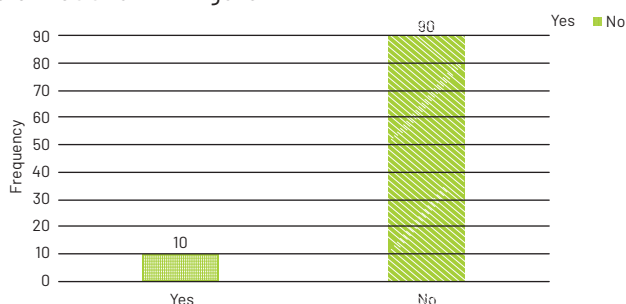


Figure 4: Frequency Distribution considering colostrum as a whole nutritious milk

DISCUSSION

A study was directed to determine the breast feeding and colostrum among women attending Sheikh Zaid hospital Rahim Yar Khan. The patients were selected through non probability convenient sampling technique. The results of this study showed that 79 women had knowledge about breastfeeding. Similar results were shown by Tadele et al., where he showed in his study that 93.6 percent of participants in the study had knowledge about breastfeeding [11]. Similar results were also shown by Daly et al., where they used factor analysis method to examine the awareness and community perceptions of breastfeeding in Western Australia. The knowledge of

breastfeeding had ORs ranging from 1.22-1.44 [12]. A cross-sectional was conducted by Saied et al., in 2013. The findings revealed that most research participants have a strong understanding of the health benefits of breast feeding for babies and mothers [13]. A similar study was also conducted by Mbada et al., and according to results 71.3% of the respondents had good knowledge while 54.0% had positive attitude [14]. However, in Sialkot settings Chattha et al., aimed to evaluate the knowledge of breast feeding and its practices. It was thus concluded that the knowledge and practice of early breastfeeding has been very poor in areas with limited facilities [15]. There are variations in separate regional studies depending on the place, socio-economic status and regional taboos. Compared to the international statistics on breastfeeding awareness and practices, we are far behind and a great deal of effort needs to be made. The results showed us that only 33 women initiated breastfeeding immediately after birth whereas 67 women didn't. According to a research by Ahluwalia et al., 32% of women did not commence breastfeeding, 4% began but discontinued it during the first week, 13% discontinued it within the first month, and 51% persisted for more than four weeks [16]. Our findings indicate a need for extensive after delivery support for breastfeeding, especially for women who may experience difficulties in breastfeeding. Similar results were shown in a study conducted by Al-Benali in 2012. One hundred and nineteen (31 per cent) participants began breastfeeding their children within one hour of birth [17]. Additionally, a 2011 research by Oche et al. revealed that 94 (53%) of the moms started nursing right away after giving delivery, making a total of 54 (31%) of the mothers adequately knowledgeable about exclusive breastfeeding [18]. The results showed that only 10 women considered colostrum as a whole nutritious milk whereas 90 women didn't. Contradictory results were shown in a study conducted by Joshi et al., who discovered that 69% of women understood colostrum was nourishing milk for feeding newborn babies and 74% of women had heard of it. 41 % of women understood it aids in healthy infant development and fights infections, and 9% of women were aware of its preventive effects. Many women were aware of colostrum's importance, but efforts are still needed to increase awareness among women regarding colostrum and breast feeding [19]. Opposing results were shown in a study conducted by Chattha et al., to check the knowledge of breast feeding and its practices in Sialkot settings in which 146 (97.3%) mothers considered the colostrum to be healthy [11]. A contradictory study conducted by Sohail et al., to evaluate the awareness, behaviors and activities of mothers in relation to colostrum feeding of newborns in the northern province of Sindh showed that approximately 72.1

per cent (n=277) of mothers proposed colostrum feeding while 27.9 per cent (n=107) of mothers rejected colostrum claiming that colostrum was non-milk, non-nutritive and inducing diarrhea. The mothers who dismissed the colostrum gave honey (n=80/107; 74.8 per cent); water (n=19/107; 17.7 per cent) and herbal preparation (n=8/107; 7.5 per cent) to children for pre-lacteal feeding. In conclusion more than a fifth of mothers do not realize of the safety effects of colostrum and provide pre-lacteal feeding to children. The majority received guidance from health professionals[20].

CONCLUSIONS

Colostrum, a rich source of protein, minerals, vitamins, and immunoglobulin that is first secreted by the mother and is crucial for children's healthy growth and development. Many expectant mothers were unaware of the importance of colostrum. The findings also showed that only few percentage of females were aware regarding the initiation of breastfeeding immediately after birth. Massive gaps in colostrums feeding behaviours still persist, primarily as a result of ignorance.

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