

# Primipara Mother's Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Breastfeeding

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**Abstract** To assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of primipara mothers regarding breastfeeding, the study was conducted in Elite Mission Hospital, Thrissur among 50 primipara mothers who were breastfeeding their newborns. The sample was collected by nonprobability convenient sampling. The knowledge, attitude and practice were assessed by using breastfeeding knowledge questionnaire, IOWA infant feeding attitude scale and breast feeding practice checklist respectively. The study revealed that the knowledge of primipara mothers regarding breastfeeding was not adequate and that was reflected on their practice of breastfeeding. They had favourable to very favourable attitude towards breastfeeding. The primary care givers need to implement strategies to educate primimothers about breastfeeding to enhance good breastfeeding practice thereby reducing infant mortality and morbidity.

**Keywords** *Knowledge on Breastfeeding; Attitude towards Breastfeeding; Practice of Breastfeeding; Primipara Mothers; IOWA Infant Feeding Attitude Scale*

## 1. Introduction

*“A newborn baby has only three demands. They are warmth in the arms of its mother, food from the breasts, and security in the knowledge of her presence; breastfeeding satisfies all three”.*

**Grantly Dick-Read**

According to WHO, (2012), Breastfeeding is an unequalled way of providing ideal food for the healthy growth and development of infants; it is also an integral part of the reproductive process with important implications for the health of mothers. As a global public health recommendation, infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life to achieve optimal growth, development and health. Thereafter, to meet their evolving nutritional requirements, infants should receive nutritionally adequate and safe complementary foods while breastfeeding continues for up to two years of age or beyond [1].

Anuchithra S. (2011) conducted a study to assess the infant feeding attitude among the antenatal women in selected maternity hospital at Belgaum, Karnataka. She reported that 91.9% of antenatal women conveyed that breast milk is ideal food for the babies, 85.1% felt breast milk is more easily digestible, 21.4% opined that formula is healthier for an infant, 86.1% believed that breastfeeding is more convenient and 79% said breast milk is cheaper. There was a significant association between infant feeding attitude and selected variables like age, educational qualification of self and spouse and employment status of self and spouse. She also reported that majority of the antenatal women have moderately positive attitude on infant feeding. This implies that the minimal effort is required by the health professionals, especially nurses, who take care of antenatal women closely in the hospital and in turn the community in educating and changing their behavior towards highly positive attitude which in turn helps to minimize infant morbidity and mortality rate [2].

## 2. Statement of Problem

A descriptive study to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of primipara mothers regarding breastfeeding in a selected hospital, Thrissur.

## 3. Objectives

- a) Assess the knowledge of breastfeeding among primipara mothers.
- b) Assess the attitude of primipara mothers towards breastfeeding.
- c) Assess the practice of breastfeeding among primipara mothers.
- d) Correlate the knowledge of breastfeeding among primipara mothers with attitude towards breastfeeding.
- e) Correlate the knowledge of breastfeeding among primipara mothers with practice of breastfeeding.
- f) Find out the association between knowledge, attitude and practice of breastfeeding among primipara mothers with selected sociodemographic variables.

## 4. Hypothesis

H1: There will be a significant relationship between knowledge of breastfeeding among primipara mothers with attitude towards breastfeeding.

H2: There will be a significant relationship between knowledge of breastfeeding among primipara mothers with practice of breastfeeding.

H3: There will be significant association between knowledge, attitude and practice of breastfeeding among primipara mothers with selected sociodemographic variables.

## 5. Methodology

### Research Approach

Descriptive survey approach

### Research Design

Non experimental descriptive design

### Setting

Elite Mission Hospital, Thrissur

### **Population**

Primipara mothers who are admitted in Elite Mission Hospital, Thrissur

### **Sample**

Primipara mothers who are breastfeeding their newborns.

### **Sample Size**

50 primipara mothers

### **Sampling Technique**

Non probability convenient sampling

### **Inclusion Criteria**

Primipara mothers:

- Who underwent normal vaginal deliveries?
- Delivered a newborn at term with an APGAR score of more than or equal to 7
- Who were interested in breastfeeding?
- Who were willing to participate?
- Who were able to read and write in Malayalam

### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Multipara mothers

Primipara mothers:

- With medical and gynecological problems
- Who develop intra partum or postpartum complications
- With abnormal breast and nipple conditions
- Infant deficits to breastfeeding such as cleft lip, cleft palate or tongue-tie
- Infant weighing less than 2.5 kg

## **6. Description of the Tool**

Sec I- Sociodemographic variables of primipara mothers consist of 12 items collected by structured questionnaire on sample characteristics like age of the mother, religion, educational status, occupation, monthly family income, type of family, place of residence, supporting persons available in the family, having helping persons for household work, exposure of the mother to breastfeeding education, source of information and whether the father supports breastfeeding the baby.

Sec II- Structured questionnaire on knowledge of breastfeeding, consisting of 20 items. Each right response carries 1 mark and each wrong response carries zero mark. (Total score 20)

Sec III- Modified IOWA Infant Feeding Attitude Scale (IIFAS) consists of 14 items scored with a 5 point rating scale (0 to 4). (Total score 56)

Sec IV- Observational checklist for assessing practice of breastfeeding technique among primi mothers, which consists of 20 items rated as yes or no on a likert scale. Each 'yes' carries a score of one and 'no' carries a score of zero.

### 6.1. Validity

The prepared instruments along with the statement, objectives, hypotheses and operational definition were submitted to four experts in the field of Nursing, two gynecologists, one neonatologist and one expert in the field of statistics for developing an appropriate tool. The items of the tool were scrutinized, selected and checked for any overlapping. The tools were finalized with the valuable suggestions of the experts.

### 6.2. Reliability

Test- retest method was used to find out the reliability of section I and II of the tool and the reliability was found to be 0.9. Iowa Infant Feeding Attachment Scale (IIFAS) was found to have a reliability of 0.85 through Cronbach's alpha. The observational checklist for breastfeeding practice is found to have an interrater reliability of 0.8.

## 7. Method of Data Collection

Permission was sought from the Medical Superintendent and Managing Partner of Elite Mission Hospital. The investigator introduced herself to the respondents, established rapport, explained about the purpose of the study and the willingness of the participants was ascertained. The respondents were assured the anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided by them. The investigator explained about the purpose of the study and a written informed consent was obtained. Data was collected from 50 samples by using structured questionnaire on breastfeeding, IOWA infant feeding attitude scale for assessing attitude and breastfeeding practice checklist for assessing practice of breastfeeding.

## 8. Major Findings and Results

### 8.1. Description of Sociodemographic Variables

Majority (50%) of primipara mothers were in the age group of 22-27 years, 52% of them were from Hindu religion, 36% were educated till graduate level, 56% were employed, 58% of them were from the monthly income group of Rs. 9001-12000, 54% of them were from joint family. 88% were residing in urban area. 92% of the primi mothers were having previous exposure to breastfeeding education from literature and mass media. 50% of the samples were having a male baby and another 50% a female baby.

The table shows that 46% of the mothers were having average knowledge of breastfeeding. 32% were having good knowledge and 22% were having poor knowledge of breastfeeding. 39% were having very favourable attitude towards breastfeeding and 11% of them were having favourable attitude. 8% of the mothers were showing good level of practice of breastfeeding. 58% showed average level of practice and 34% showed poor level of breastfeeding practice. No one fell under the category of very poor practice of breastfeeding.

**Table 1:** N= 50

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Knowledge score	9	17	13.4	2.7
Attitude score	40	54	46.7	4.2
Practice Score	8	17	12.2	2.4

Table 1 shows the obtained scores of mean and standard deviation of knowledge, attitude and practice scores of primipara mothers regarding breastfeeding.

**Table 2:** N=50

Knowledge Level	Frequency	Percent
Very poor	0	0
Poor	11	22.0
Average	23	46.0
Good	16	32.0

Table 2 shows that 32% of the primipara mothers were having good knowledge on breastfeeding, 46% were having average knowledge and 22% of them were having poor knowledge on breastfeeding. No one fall under the category of having very poor knowledge on breastfeeding.

**Table 3:** N=50

Attitude Level	Frequency	Percent
Unfavourable	0	0
Moderately favourable	0	0
Favourable	11	22.0
Very favourable	39	78.0

Table 3 shows that 78% and 22% of the primipara mothers were having very favourable and favourable attitude towards breastfeeding respectively. No one falls under the category of moderately favourable and unfavourable attitude towards breastfeeding.

**Table 4:** N=50

Practice Level	Frequency	Percent
Very poor	0	0
Poor	17	34.0
Average	29	58.0
Good	4	8.0

Table 4 shows that only 8% of the primipara mothers were having good practice on breastfeeding. 58% and 34% of the primipara mothers were having average and poor practice on breastfeeding respectively. No one showed very poor practice level.

**Table 5:** Correlation Matrix on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice N=50

	Pearson Correlation 'r' value	P Value	Significance
Knowledge	-	-	-
Attitude	0.026	0.858	NS
Practice	0.428	0.002	S

The findings showed that there was a significant correlation between knowledge and practice of breastfeeding among primipara mothers. But there was no significant correlation between knowledge and attitude.

**Table 6:** Association between Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Breastfeeding among Primipara Mothers with Selected Sociodemographic Variables. N=50

Demographic Variables	Chi-sq. (knowledge)	P Value	Sig.	Chi-sq. (Attitude)	P Value	Sig.	Chi- sq. (Practice)	P Value	Sig.
Age	4.807	0.308	NS	3.014	0.222	NS	15.247	0.004	S
Religion	0.369	0.985	NS	1.43	0.489	NS	1.641	0.801	NS
Education	7.396	0.286	NS	27.05	0.001	S	3.143	0.791	NS
Occupation	0.718	0.698	NS	4.723	0.03	S	0.659	0.719	NS
Income	2.3	0.681	NS	0.406	0.816	NS	2.462	0.651	NS
Type of family	0.065	0.968	NS	0.415	0.52	NS	3.798	0.15	NS
Place of residence	3.169	0.205	NS	7.927	0.005	S	3.401	0.183	NS
Exp. to bf. Education	15.415	0.0001	S	0.023	0.88	NS	8.44	0.15	S
Sex of the baby	0.134	0.935	NS	1.049	0.306	NS	0.84	0.657	NS

Table 6 shows the association between knowledge, attitude and practice of breastfeeding among primipara mothers with selected sociodemographic variables. It shows that there is a significant association between knowledge and exposure to breastfeeding education. There is significant association between attitude and educational status, occupation and place of residence. There is significant association between practice and age of mothers and exposure to breastfeeding education. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level.

## 9. Discussion

A descriptive study was conducted to explore the knowledge, attitude and practices of breastfeeding among postnatal mothers and factors that determine them in the Neonatal Division, Department of Pediatrics at a tertiary care hospital in South India. The data was collected from 100 postnatal mothers by trained interviewers using a structured proforma. In addition to demographic data, mothers were also asked about their knowledge on and attitude towards breastfeeding and the practices they follow. The knowledge of the mothers was inadequate in areas of time of initiation of breastfeeding (92%), colostrum feeding (56%), duration of exclusive breastfeeding (38%), knowledge on expressed breastmilk (51%) and continuation of breastfeeding while baby is sick. Better scores correlated significantly with higher maternal age, better maternal education, higher socioeconomic status and having received antenatal care. There is still a need for programmes, which support and encourage breast-feeding particularly at a primary care level, focusing more on younger, less well-educated women and those from lower socioeconomic class [3].

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Women in rural areas have a very positive attitude towards initiation of breastfeeding. In a study conducted in the rural areas of Karnataka, almost all the women had initiated breastfeeding and continued to breastfeed beyond 9 months. Other studies conducted in rural areas show that almost all the mothers initiate breastfeeding. Urban areas in the other studies also show a similar pattern [4].

A study was conducted by Sushma Sriram et al. [6] on knowledge, attitude and practices of mothers regarding infant feeding in 2013. They found no association between knowledge and practice. Chidozie E. Mbada et al. conducted a study on evaluation of mother's knowledge, attitude and practices on breastfeeding and found that there is no association between knowledge, attitude and practice of breastfeeding with selected sociodemographic variables [7].

The above findings were supported with this study done on knowledge, attitude and practice of breastfeeding among primipara mothers and showed that there is a need to enhance a little more knowledge and bring good practice towards breastfeeding.

## 10. Recommendations

- 1) The study can be replicated with the large group.
- 2) A comparative study can be conducted among rural and urban residents.
- 3) An experimental study can be conducted giving a structured teaching module on breastfeeding.

## 11. Conclusion

This study concluded that the knowledge of primipara mothers regarding breastfeeding was not completely adequate and this was reflected on the practice. But the primipara mothers were having favourable to very favourable attitude towards breastfeeding. Hence the primary care givers need to implement strategies to enhance good practices of breastfeeding among mothers to reduce infant mortality and morbidity [8].

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