

Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Pregnant Women regarding Benefits of Breast Feeding and Immunization in newborns.

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ABSTRACT:

Objectives: To study the knowledge attitude and practices of pregnant women regarding benefits of breastfeeding and immunization.

Study design: Descriptive cross-sectional study

Material and Method: This study was conducted at Department of Obstetrics of P.N.S. Shifa Hospital Karachi over a period of six months. All pregnant women admitted in the obstetric ward were included. After obtaining informed consent participants were administered questionnaire, which was filled in by the researcher. The questions were in the native language. Performa includes questions pertinent to knowledge, attitude and practices regarding benefits of breast feeding and immunization to achieve the millennium development goal 4.

Results: Despite of the level of education out of 235 participants at most of them (97%) were aware of role of immunization and breast feeding. But 14.5% lack knowledge of frequency of breast feeding. 42.11% participants said doctor advise her to breast feed while 52.2% counseled by the family lady, midwife and friends. 45.96% participants never got advice by the doctors against use of un-prescribed drugs during pregnancy.

Conclusion: The knowledge attitude and practices of pregnant women regarding benefits of breastfeeding and immunization are not upto the mark. There is a need to increase the education of the mothers to ensure better understanding regarding breastfeeding and immunization to achieve the Millennium Development Goal 4.

Key words: Breast feeding, Immunization, Pregnant women.

INTRODUCTION:

Early marriage, lack of education, large family size and lack of family support leads to increase in burden of child illness which can be prevented. Of annual four million neonatal deaths, majority in the developing world, approximately three-quarters die within the first week of life^{1,2}. Pakistan has one of the highest newborn mortality rates³. Teenager girls, the future mothers do not have proper knowledge regarding the benefits of breast feeding for her as well as for the baby, optimum breast feeding practices and disadvantages of top feeding^{2,4}. Globally only half of infants under 5 month of age and 30% of infants aged 1–5 months are exclusively breastfed⁶. Prevalence of exclusive breast feeding (EBF) was 41.5% in Pakistan. Also there is a significant lack of knowledge of women⁷of child bearing age about immunization their benefits and consequences of non-immunization to the

child⁷. Certainly health education regarding these matters plays a key role to the care of their own health as well as the baby^{8,9}. Breastfeeding and counseling with emphasis on correct technique can improve the EBF/ FBF rates¹⁰. World health assembly in 2001 urged the member states to strengthen activities and develop new approaches to protect, promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for six months as a global public health recommendation, taking into account the findings of the WHO expert consultation on optimal duration of exclusive breastfeeding, and to provide safe and appropriate complementary foods, with continued breastfeeding for up to two years of age or beyond, emphasizing channels of social dissemination of these concepts in order to lead communities to adhere to these practices¹¹. It is well documented fact, immunization directly increased the life expectancy by reducing mortality¹². Benefits are being observed throughout the world. Maternal tetanus toxoid vaccination is recommended to prevent maternal neonatal tetanus deaths. United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) jointly established the goal to reduce the deaths from 6.7 Neonatal tetanus deaths per 1000 live births to 1 neonatal death in 1980s^{13,23}. Unfortunately, Pakistan is among those countries those could not achieve the target ¹⁴In a study conducted in Peshawar district of North West Frontier Province of Pakistan, 65% of women in urban areas were vaccinated, while in rural areas 60% were vaccinated. Females in the

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urban area were older and had more knowledge regarding TT vaccination than females in the rural areas. More women in the urban areas had made antenatal care visits (79%) than those in rural area (50%)¹⁵. Immunization and breast feeding are key component to enhance infant life expectancy and reduce maternal and neonatal child deaths per year.

The study was conducted to assess knowledge of married pregnant women admitted in gynae/obsward regarding advantages of breast feeding and immunization. Their attitude and practices about breast feeding and immunization for the benefits of the baby as well as their own health. We also want to know the hurdles in their way to practice if they are acknowledged. Results of the study can help to improve the hospital counseling techniques regarding the breast feeding and immunization at antenatal checkup for the improvement of Maternal and Child Health (MCH).

MATERIAL & METHODS:

This cross-sectional descriptive study was done in the gynae/obs department of PNS Shifa Hospital, Karachi over a period of six months. All married women admitted in the gynae/obs ward were included in the study. Participants were administered a detailed printed questionnaire, which was filled in by the researcher. The questions were in the native language. Performa includes questions on basic demographics and questions pertinent to knowledge, attitude and practices regarding benefits of breast feeding and immunization to achieve the millennium development goal 4. Data analysis was performed through SPSS version 19.0. Frequencies and percentages were computed to present all categorical variables.

RESULTS:

With the method of convenient sampling, 235 women

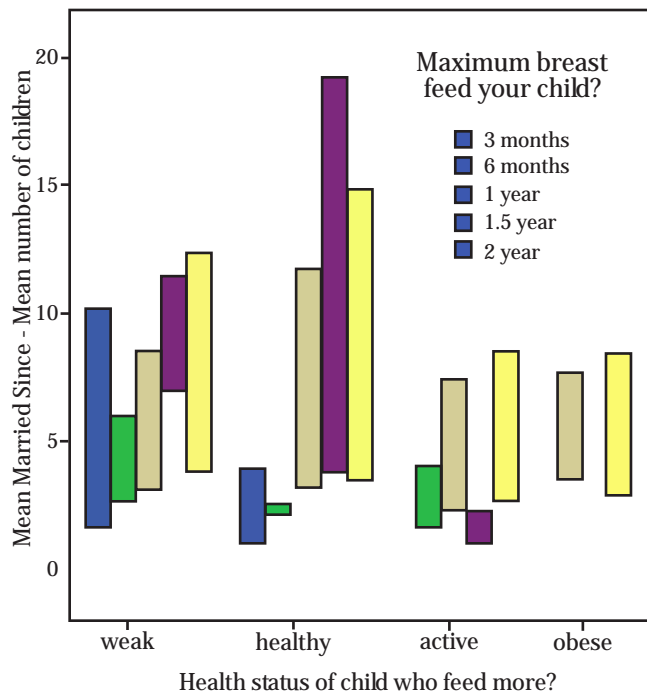
were included in the study at confidence interval of 95%. About 78% of the respondent was less than 40 years out of that 40% were less than 30 years of age. Mean age of the respondents' was 33 years. Regarding the educational status of women 32% participants are totally uneducated while 38% were only educated to the level of metric. Hardly 18% of women were graduate and above. More or less same level of education was observes in the husbands as well. As far as awareness about vaccination role on health is concerned, 97.4% of women had awareness about the benefits of vaccination, and 93.5% of their children were vaccinated according to EPI schedule while 90% of the mothers have been vaccinated for tetanus toxoid.

As far as breast feeding is concern 99% women gave positive response to prefer breast feeding for their babies, while 97.4% and 96% of women were aware about the benefits and duration of breast feeding respectively. But it has been found that only 85.5% women were aware about the frequency of breast feeding. Only 82% women think that breastfeeding is a successful method of contraception, 90.5% child who fed more than others are healthy and active. Only 9.5% of women ever faced problem during feeding with 55%, 5% and 40% experienced pain, cracked nipple and other problems respectively. 60.43% participants were booked and regularly visited for antenatal checkup but only 42.11% said that doctor counseled her on breast feeding and 52.2% were counseled by family lady, midwife or friends. 45.96% participants never got advice by the doctors against use of self-medication during pregnancy. As there is no contraindication to stop breast feeding during pregnancy, surprisingly only 10.7% women know that breast feeding should be continued during pregnancy. Figure illustrates link between feeding, health status, years of marriage and number of children. Firstly, it is

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	07	3.0	3.0	3.0
Family Lady	92	39.1	39.1	42.1
Friends	10	4.3	4.3	46.4
Obstetrician / Pediatrician	96	40.9	40.9	87.2
Dai/Midwife	17	7.2	7.2	94.5
Literature	8	3.4	3.4	97.9
Internet	5	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	235	100.0	100.0	

Table: 1 Indicates the mother's source of awareness

evident that as we move from left to right i.e. week to obese duration of feeding increase. Empirically, 3 month duration tends to disappeared while 2 years duration gradually dominated in successive health stages. This shows that feeding is necessary for good health. Secondly,



vertical overview of graph shows mean number of children and means years of marriage indicated by upper and lower tips of bars respectively. On an average families having more number of children enjoyed healthy status of their children while having lower number of children have obese child. Apparently this shows that more the number of child, more it would be difficult to maintain child health, but critical view shows that this fact is attributed to feeding as obese children enjoyed maximum duration of feeding followed by active, healthy and week respectively. As far as years of marriage is concern, it can be seen that as on average years of marriage increased, duration of feeding tend to increase. But effect of marriage years on health status of children is inconclusive. In short, duration of feeding is important determinant of health status of children.

DISCUSSION:

In this study we identify the awareness level regarding immunization and breast feeding, their major source of knowledge about EBF. We also know the understanding of the mothers about the breast feeding as a contraception and child health who fed for long duration over other siblings.

The knowledge of breast feeding and vaccination was adequate and most of the women continued breast feeding for more than a year. These results match with

the study by Ali S et al ¹⁶ and Kilafunda JK et al ¹⁷. Most of the respondents were aware of frequency and period of exclusive breast feeding; these results are higher than study by Ali S et al ¹⁶ according to WHO recommendation ¹⁸. Despite of, great difference between level of education of respondents and socioeconomic background. This study result shows 67.7% think breastfeeding as successful contraception method. Labbok MH ¹⁹ stated in his study "The high efficacy of the lactational amenorrhea method is confirmed". The number of participants had ever faced problem during breastfeeding. Results of practice of Tetanus vaccination were more consistent with the results of S. Hasnain and N.H. Skeikh²⁰ than Rubeena Gul stated 73% in her study^{21,25} but below the WHO expected level of vaccination at 100%^{22,24}. Their major source of information was family lady, mid wife or friend. Regrettably, many of the pregnant women on regular antenatal visit in hospital never get advice by doctor or hospital for the use of un-prescribed drugs and breastfeeding techniques. The findings illustrate the positive impact health workers can have, as well as the need to raise the awareness of the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding among both health workers and mothers. Furthermore, continued counseling of mothers is required on how to handle with the stressful situation during prolong exclusive breastfeeding and family and community support requires to assist during this period.

CONCLUSION:

Despite the efforts of health policy makers, the results show a situation that is not getting better. Women were aware of the advantages and disadvantages of breast and bottle feeding but a disparity was observed between their perception and practices.

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