

Breast Feeding Practices: A Predictor Based Study from Tiruvallur District, Tamilnadu

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Abstract

Introduction:

World Health Organization recommends that practice of exclusive breast feeding for infants up to 6 months of age and continue breast feeding up to 2 years along with weaning foods. This study aims to describe the prevalence of breast feeding practices among rural areas. The primary objective of the study was to describe the early initiation and exclusive breast feeding and its predictors.

Materials and Methods:

The cross sectional study was conducted at the primary health center in ponnammalle block of Tiruvallur district. The data were collected from organized camp for nursing and pregnant women at Primary Health Centre in Ponnammalle block by pre-tested and structured questionnaire.

Results:

Most of the mothers (89%) initiated breast feeding within one hour of delivery. Those who delayed to initiate the breast feeding were provided the reason of cesarean section and baby was in incubator. Majority of the mothers (71%) practiced exclusive breast feeding for first six months. Fewer mothers (10%) started weaning food before 3 months. 62% of mothers continued the breast feeding for more than a year. Most of the mothers stopped breast feeding around 10 months of age. Initiation of weaning practices after six of months of age was highly significant with exclusive breast feeding.

CONCLUSION:

The present study indicates that most of the rural women were aware about practice of exclusive breast feeding and Initiation of breast feeding and weaning foods. Further studies are necessary to rule out the other factors like psychological factors and traditional practices possibly involved in breast feeding practices.

INTRODUCTION:

Breastfeeding is the normal way of providing young infants with the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development. Virtually all mothers can breastfeed, provided they have accurate information, and the support of their family, the health care system and society at large. Colostrum, the yellowish, sticky breast milk produced at the end of pregnancy, is recommended by World Health Organization (WHO) as the perfect food for the newborn [1]. Benefits of Breast feeding to mothers include reduced risk of breast trauma, lower risk of damage to nipple from breast pump, reduced risks to mothers health like reduced risk of breast cancer other psychological effects like potential reduction in perceived stress and negative mood after feedings [2]. Breastfeeding reduces mothers' risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in their life [3]. Breast feeding has both short terms and long terms benefits particularly on reduction of mortality and morbidity of infants.

A pooled analysis of many studies from middle and low income countries showed that breast feeding substantially reduces the risk of death from infectious diseases in the first two years of life. [4] World Health Organization recommends that practice of exclusive breast feeding for infants up to 6 months of age and continue breast feeding up to 2 years along with weaning foods. National Guidelines on Infant and Young Child Feeding recommends that initiating breastfeeding within one hour of birth, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, initiation of appropriate complementary feeding from the age of 6 months and continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond. [5]. Malnutrition has been responsible, directly or indirectly, for 60% of the 10.9 million deaths annually among children under five worldwide. Over two-thirds of these deaths, which are often associated with inappropriate feeding practices, occur during the first year of life [6]. Globally, 117 million years of life lost are attributable to suboptimal breast-feeding among children in developing countries [7]. The current study focused to determine the prevalence of the early initiation and exclusive breast feeding and other breast feeding practices as well its predictors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross sectional study was conducted at the primary health center in Ponnamalle block of Tiruvallur district. The camp has been organized for pregnant women and nursing mothers on the world breast feeding week -2013 at the primary health center. Around 100 women were approached to participate in the study but only 46 were provided consent. Pre-tested and structured questionnaire was administered to collect information about breast feeding practices. The questionnaire includes socio economic data, demographic data, religion, and type of family, initiation of breast feeding, knowledge about benefits of breast feeding and weaning practices and other breast feeding practices. Data analysis was done using statistical software "R" Version 3.0.1.

RESULTS

In our study the majority of mothers were from the age group of 20-25 years old (68.9%). 46.7% of the participants in our study got married at the age of 19-21 years old. Approximately 24% were married early (<18 years).

This study shows 40% of population was educated up to high school and 22.2% was up to secondary level and 11.1% were illiterate. Majority of the participants were living in nuclear family (57.8%) and (42.2%) of them are with joint family. (Table-1).

Obstetrics characteristic of the participants showed most of the women were multiparous (51%), and (35%) were Primigravida and (65%) were Multigravida. Among the participants most of them have normal parturition through vaginal delivery (73%) and (27%) were by cesarean section with 18% of them faced abortion during pregnancy.

Table 1 Socio Demographic Characteristics

Socio Demographic Profile	No. of Mothers in Percentage (%)
Mothers Age	
<20	4.4
20-25	68.9
25-30	24.5
>30	2.2
Age of Marriage	
≤18	24.4
19-21	46.7
22-24	24.4
≥25	4.4
Education level	
No Education	11.1
Primary level	17.8
Secondary level	22.2
High school	40
Graduate	8.9
Monthly family income	
<5000	33.3
5000-9000	46.7
10000-14000	8.9
15000-19000	6.7
≥20000	4.4
Family Type	
Nuclear	57.8
Joint	42.2
Religion	
Christian	15.6
Muslim	31.1
Hindu	53.3

Most of the mothers (89%) initiated breast feeding within one hour of delivery. Those who delayed to initiate the breast feeding were provided the reason of cesarean section and baby was in incubator.

Majority of the mothers (71%) practiced exclusive breast feeding for first six months. This study shows that most of the study population stopped breast feeding around 10 months of age [Fig: 2]. Fewer mothers (10%) started weaning food before 3 months.

Most of the mothers (80%) know about the beneficial effects of breast feeding to them. 91% of mothers know about the benefits of breast feeding to infants. Most of the mothers fed their children 5-6 times a day. No one in this study used tobacco/, pan and Oral Contraceptive pills while lactation.

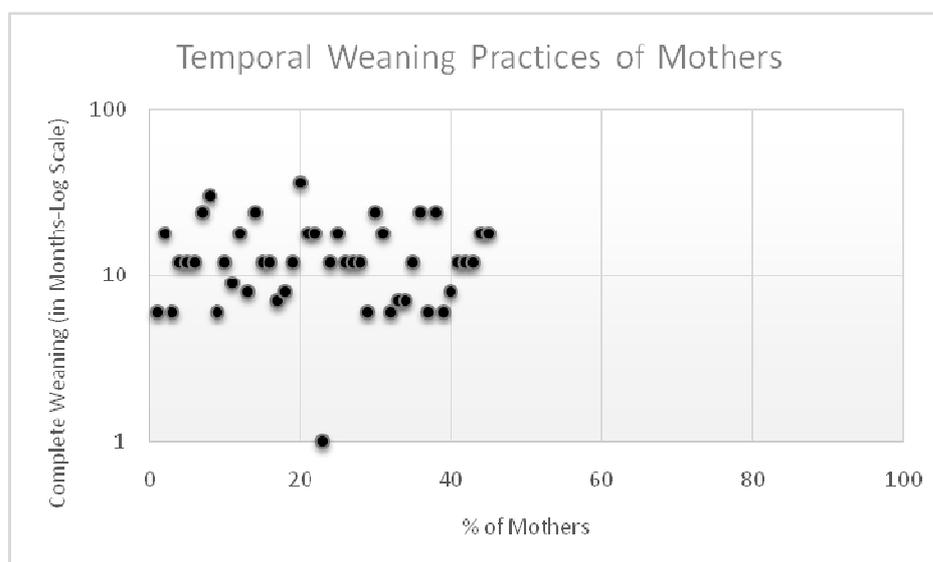
Table-2: Predictors of Exclusive Breast Feeding

Predictors	Category	Exclusive Breast Feeding (% of Mothers)		P-Value
		Yes	No	
Socio Demographic Predictors				
Mother's Age	<20	6.2	0	0.148
	20-25	75	53.8	
	25-30	15.6	46.2	
	>30	3.1	0	
Age of Marriage	≤18	21.9	30.8	0.312
	19-21	6.2	0	
	22-24	53.1	30.8	
	≥25	18.8	38.6	
Educational Level	No Education	15.6	0	0.244
	Primary	21.9	7.7	
	Secondary	15.6	38.5	
	High School	37.5	46.2	
	Graduate	9.4	7.6	
Monthly Family Income	< 5000	40.6	15.4	0.341
	5000-9000	43.8	53.8	
	10000-14000	9.4	7.7	
	15000-19000	3.1	15.4	
	≥20000	3.1	7.7	
Family Type	Nuclear	59.4	53.8	0.734
	Joint	40.6	46.2	
Religion	Christian	15.6	15.4	0.781
	Muslim	28.1	38.5	
	Hindu	56.3	46.1	
Occupation	House-Wife	96.9	100	0.654
	Professional	3.1	0	
Maternal Health Predictors				
Type of Pregnancy	Primigravida	43.8	61.5	0.279
	Multigravida	56.2	38.5	
Type of Delivery	Normal	71.9	76.9	0.729
	Caesarian	28.1	23.1	
No. of Abortion	0	81.2	84.6	0.643
	≥1	18.8	15.4	

Knowledge of Breastfeeding	No	21.9	15.4	0.622
	Yes	78.1	84.6	
Initiation of Breastfeeding	Within 1hr	87.5	84.6	0.793
	≥1hr	12.5	15.4	
Initiation of Weaning Process	≤ 6 Months	12.5	92.3	0.000***
	>6 Months	87.5	7.7	
<i>Signif. Codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1</i>				

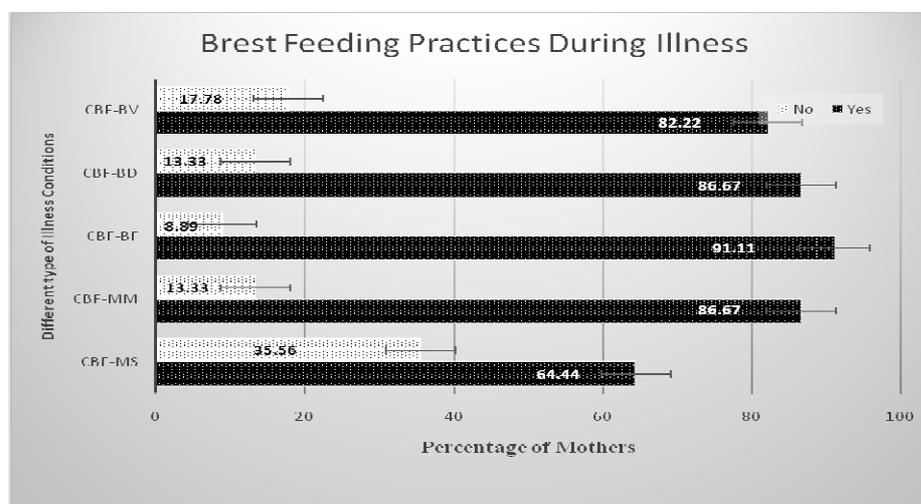
In this study we estimated the association between the practice of exclusive breast feeding with socio demographic profile and maternal health estimators tabulated in table- 2. Those who initiated the weaning process after 6 month of age was significant (p value=0.000) with the exclusive breast feeding than who initiated before six months.

Fig: 2 Complete Weaning of Breast Feeding Status



Most of the mothers continued breast feeding even their infants had illness like vomiting, diahorrea, fever and under their own sickness and menstruation were plotted in Fig: 3. Mothers who know the benefits of breast feeding to infants were 2.72 times higher exclusively breast feed their children than mothers who don't know the benefits of breast feeding to infants.

Figure 3: Breast Feeding Practices by Women during Health Illness



DISCUSSION:

A cross sectional, descriptive study was done to estimate the prevalence of early initiation and exclusive breast feeding and other breast feeding practices in the rural area of ponnammalle block of Tiruvallur district. According to IYCF guidelines Government of India recommends that initiation of breast feeding should begin immediately after delivery preferably within one hour [8]. In our study 89% of mothers initiated Breast feeding within one hour of delivery. Similarly 97% of mothers initiated breast feeding within one hour of delivery in a study conducted in rural Bangalore [10]. In this study 71% of infants received exclusive breast feeding. Another similar study in Tamilnadu shows that 68.4% of infants have received exclusive breast feeding [9]. 62% of mothers were given exclusive breast feeding to their infants in a study conducted at Government medical college & Hospital, Rajkot [11]. We found that initiation of weaning process after six months of age was highly significant with the exclusive breast feeding. Internationally, it is promoted that women should exclusively breastfeed their infants for up to 6 months of age and breastfeeding should continue into the second year of a child’s life and for longer if possible or desired [12]. Study conducted by Melina Mgongo etal at Kilimanjaro region women’s shows that advice on breast feeding after delivery as a predictor had significant with exclusive breast feeding. Other predictors like single mothers and those who drank alcohol had decreased odds to practice Exclusive Breast Feeding for six months [13].

CONCLUSION:

The present study indicates that most of the rural women were aware about practice of exclusive breast feeding. Most of them initiated the breast feeding within an hour after delivery and continued the breast feeding for more than a year. Further studies are necessary to correlate the factors associated with the breast feeding practices.

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