

ORIGINAL ARTICLE**PERSUADE MOTHERS IN POST NATAL WARD FOR
TIMELY INITIATION OF BREASTFEEDING.****Mamtarani¹, Ratan K Srivastava², B.Divakar³**¹Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Government Medical College, Surat²Professor & Head, Department of Community Medicine, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi³Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacology, MP Shah Medical College, Jamnagar**Correspondence:**

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Timely initiation of breast feeding has been an important issue since last many decades. However, encouragement and early initiation of breast feeding gained momentum since last 20 years. The traditional wisdom and scientific research have proved that mother's milk is the best.

Design: It is a Cross sectional study conducted in urban tertiary care teaching hospital.

Methods: a pretested semi-structured questionnaire was used to interview hospitalised mothers. This paper is the result of the interview of 600 women who delivered babies in the hospital. Their Details of socio-demographic features were enquired in addition to the questions related to their initiation of breast feeding after the birth of baby. Timely initiation of breast-feeding was calculated in this paper as percent of infants (0 - <12 months) who were put to the breast within one hour of delivery.

Results: Out of all deliveries, breast feeding was timely initiated with in one hour only by 1.0 percent of mothers. However 30 percent mothers initiated breast feeding within two hours. **Conclusion:** The observations of the present study supports that the health functionaries must utilise the opportunity to persuade mothers in the postnatal ward after delivery of their babies for early initiation of breast feeding.

Key Words: Timely initiation, breast feeding, postnatal ward, urban area.

INTRODUCTION

Timely initiation of breast feeding has been an important issue since last many decades in India. In the field of medical research, many studies were carried out and suggestions were made time and again to improve the situation. The suckling reflex is another very important parameter and is found to be very active during the first half hour after birth (1). If the infant is not fed then the reflex diminishes rapidly only to reappear adequately forty hours later (2). This may be called "The fourth stage of labour" which includes putting the baby to breast after birth and ensuring the intake of colostrums by the neonate. The exact time of initiation of breast feeding has been suggested right from birth in

the delivery room itself to within one hour after delivery.

In order to ensure success in breastfeeding, it is important that it be initiated as early as possible during the neonatal period (3). This study was planned to understand the current situation of women of lower social class belonging to urban areas of Surat district about their practices and factors influencing the initiation of breast feeding after the delivery of their babies. So that effective strategy may be planned to persuade mothers for timely initiation of breast feeding who are coming for institutional delivery.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study was carried out from June 2006 to October 2006 for a period of 5 months in an urban area of Surat district, Gujarat. The subjects of the present study were hospitalised women who delivered babies in the postnatal ward of New Civil Hospital, Surat. Pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire was used. The information was collected using interview technique within 8-12 hours of delivery to reduce the effect of recall bias. More than half of the women (60.5%) who came for delivery in a tertiary care hospital were covered. Their details of socio-demographic features were enquired in addition to the questions related to their initiation of breast feeding after the birth of baby. The data of this study was collected by cross sectional technique and did not represent any particular cohort of mothers and their babies. The data was analysed by EpiInfo 3.2 (window based) software.

The following WHO definitions were used (4):

1. Initiation of breast-feeding: It is the time when baby is placed "skin-to-skin" with the mother and offered the breast milk for the first time after birth.

2. Timely initiation of breast-feeding: Refers to percent of infants (0 - < 12 months) who were put to the breast within one hour of delivery.

Calculated as: $\frac{\text{Number of infants (0 < 12 months) put to the breast within 1 hour of delivery} \times 100}{\text{Total number of infants (0 < 12 months)}}$

Total number of infants (0 < 12 months)

RESULTS

About half of mothers (51.5%) were young (20-24 years) followed by one-third mothers (33.8%) who were 25-29 years old. Two-fifth mothers were illiterate & were from all age groups. Very few mothers (5%) were educated up to higher secondary school & more. Majority (83.2%) of mothers were housewife and 17.8% were working. Most of the mothers (83.7%) were from lower social class III to V as per BG Prasad's modified classification for the year 2006. Three-fourth of the mothers (77.2%) gave birth to babies by normal delivery & 22.8% by caesarean section. More than three-fourth mothers (83.6%) were of the young age group of 20-29 years who delivered babies weighing less than 2.5 kg. Most of the mothers (89.5%) gave colostrums to their babies. Out of those 205 babies to whom Pre-lacteal feed was given, honey was the commonest and was given to 50.2 % of babies.

Out of all deliveries, breast milk was initiated within one hour only by 1.0 percent of mothers (Table1).

Breast feeding was initiated by 1.2% Hindu mothers within one hour. Anyway 38.3% of Muslim mothers initiated breast feeding within two hours. The percentage of mothers belonging to General, SC, ST and SEBC who initiated breast feeding within one hour was 0.6%, 0.5%, 1.8% and 1.6% respectively. Even so, one-fourth mothers of all caste started breast feeding within two hours. Out of total 463 normal deliveries, only six mothers initiated breast feeding within one hour whereas none of mothers who delivered by caesarean section. In any way it was encouraging to note that almost all mothers (100%) initiated breast feeding within ten hours in the hospital. Those who were illiterate mothers (1.2%) initiated the breast feeding within one hour of delivery compared to those (0.9%) literate mothers but the difference was not significant. Out of 102 working mothers nil had initiated breast feeding within one hour of delivery.

DISCUSSION

Mothers are more likely to successfully initiate lactation and maintain optimal breast-feeding behaviour if they initiate breast-feeding shortly after birth. Breast-feeding should begin no later than one hour after the delivery of the infant (4). For Assessing "timely initiation of breast-feeding" (1998-99) the percent of infants (0 - <12 months) who were put to the breast within one hour of delivery was calculated as suggested by WHO (4).

Table1. depicts the influence on the timing of initiation of breast feeding in relation to the different variables. All the mothers had initiated breast feeding within first ten hours. This finding showed an improvement as compared to the past but it cannot be called timely initiation. Hence, one has to measure initiation of breast feeding within one hour of delivery. Very few Hindu mothers (1.2%) initiated breast feeding within one hour but none of the Muslim mothers. Somehow most of the mothers (92.7%) initiated breast feeding within six hours of delivery. NFHS-2 (1998-99) study for Gujarat revealed that 10% mothers out of 1,324 under three children initiated breast-feeding within one hour of birth, while 36.6% mothers initiated breast-feeding on the same day. However in this

case of institutional delivery all mothers initiated breast feeding within 10 hour. This improvement could be due to the on going IMNCI training at this institution since 2004.

Table 1: Influence of different variables on the timing of initiation of breast feeding of mothers who delivered babies at a teaching hospital

Variables	Timely initiation of breast feeding								
	Within 1 hr		Within 2 hr		Within 6 hr		Within 10 hr		Total n
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Religion									
Hindu	6	1.2	149	28.7	485	93.4	519	100.0	519
Muslim	nil	Nil	31	38.3	71	87.7	81	100.0	81
Caste									
General	1	0.6	50	30.5	159	97.0	164	100.0	164
Schedule caste	1	0.5	58	27.9	193	92.8	208	100.0	208
Schedule tribe	3	1.8	54	32.5	151	91.0	166	100.0	166
SEBC	1	1.6	18	29.0	53	85.5	62	100.0	62
Type of delivery									
Normal	6	1.3	147	31.7	431	93.1	463	100.0	463
Caesarean	nil	Nil	33	24.1	125	91.2	137	100.0	137
Education of mother									
Illiterate	3	1.2	62	24.3	238	93.3	255	100.0	255
Literate	3	0.9	118	34.2	318	92.2	345	100.0	345
Occupation of mother									
Working	nil	Nil	28	27.5	95	93.1	102	100.0	102
Housewife	6	1.2	152	30.5	461	92.6	498	100.0	498
Prelacteal feed									
Given	2	1.0	58	28.3	194	94.6	205	100.0	205
Not given	4	1.0	122	30.9	362	91.6	395	100.0	395
Colostrums									
Given	6	1.1	164	30.5	498	92.7	537	100.0	537
Not given	nil	Nil	16	25.4	58	92.1	63	100.0	63
Parity									
Primipara	1	0.5	51	27.3	174	93.0	187	100.0	187
Multipara	5	1.2	129	31.2	382	92.5	413	100.0	413
Antenatal care									
Received	6	1.1	168	29.9	519	92.3	562	100.0	562
Not received	nil	Nil	12	31.6	37	97.4	38	100.0	38
Premature baby									
Yes	1	2.8	12	33.3	31	86.1	36	100.0	36
No	5	0.9	168	29.8	525	93.1	564	100.0	564
Total	6	1.00	180	30.0	556	92.7	600	100.0	600

Most of the faculty of the paediatrics are trained and are working as facilitator for the training. But there is a scope of further improvement. None of the working mothers in this study had initiated breast feeding within one hour of delivery. Among multiparous women initiation of breast feeding within one and two hours was observed to be earlier as compared to primipara. The previous experience of delivery had lead to a little rise in timely initiation of breast feeding but is not appreciable and call in question about the need of persuasion of mothers in postnatal

ward for timely initiation of breast feeding. The recent finding of NFHS-3 (2005-06) ranked Gujarat on 18th position in India by initiation of breast feeding (27.1%) within 1 hour (5). According to WHO's indicator for assessing breast feeding practices, **timely initiation of breast feeding rate**(4) in the postnatal ward of the hospital was very low (1.0%) whereas 30 percent of mothers had initiated breast feeding within first two hours. The delay happened due to occurrence of too many deliveries in the labour room and the team of doctors and nurses

gave priority to the shifting of mother to the indoor ward where they were finally motivated for early initiation of breast feeding. But this process of shifting use to take one hour leading to delay in **timely initiation of breast feeding** and thus important time was missed. Therefore it is recommended that all mothers who deliver their babies in hospital and are in labour room must be encouraged for the commencement of breast feeding as early as possible preferably within one hour of delivery for better health of mother as well as child.

Initiation of breast feeding within one hour of birth was one of the Ten steps to successful breastfeeding on which the BFHI was based and implemented in 1992(6). The findings from a Ghana study (2006) clearly showed for the first time in the world, that ensuring initiation of breast feeding within one hour could cut 22% all neonatal mortality, assume great importance(7). It calls for support to all mothers in the postnatal ward during the first hour to ensure early initiation of breast feeding.

Very few mothers (1.1%) initiated breastfeeding within 1 hour in spite of receiving antenatal care. This may be partially possible that the antenatal care services received by the mothers was not enough to educate them regarding breast feeding practices. This was supported by the fact that only 13.4 percent of mothers received the right breast feeding advices out of all those receiving the antenatal care in another hospital of New Delhi(8).

On further enquiry it was brought to notice that none of the mothers of this study was educated about the early initiation of breast feeding during antenatal check-ups. Whereas the breast feeding policy of the UNICEF and WHO addresses issues to promote breast feeding right from the antenatal period(9). Therefore, it is again recommended to include the component of timely initiation of breast feeding while imparting health education to mother during antenatal period.

Obstetricians and other concerned with maternity care have key roles in promoting breastfeeding (10). A pregnant woman has confidence in her/his obstetrician and takes her/his advice and even respects her/his opinion regarding childbirth and care of the neonate (11). The family Paediatrician can influence a mother's decision for timely initiation of breastfeeding.

A significant difference on the aspect of early initiation of breast-feeding (within one hour) was noticed between mothers with normal delivery and those who underwent caesarean section. Similar findings have also been observed in studies reported earlier (1,12). But in this study the caesarean section delivery could not reflect as barrier for initiation of breast feeding within six hours as 91.2% mothers initiated breast feeding by that time.

Early, successful initiation of breastfeeding gets affected negatively by caesarean delivery was reported in 1990(13). Mothers may be trained to use pillows to provide support for the area of incision. The efforts must be carried to promote early initiation of breast feeding even after caesarean delivery.

205 mothers gave pre-lacteal feed to the child. The practice of pre-lacteal feeding was found to be associated with delay in initiation of breast feeding till within two hours of delivery. Ahmed et al reported that type and duration of pre-lacteal feeding had significant negative influence on milk secretion. Pre-lacteal feeding forms a vicious cycle with 'coming in' of milk; it first delays initiation, which later encourages pre-lacteal feeding (14).

The WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK (WBW) 2007 also aimed precisely towards this objective (**Breastfeeding: The 1st Hour-Save One million babies!**)(15) and also to raise public awareness of the benefits of this achievable practice on newborn and maternal health.

The observations of the present study supports to frame a policy that the health functionaries of postnatal ward (Paediatrician, obstetricians & nurses) must utilize the opportunity to persuade mothers for timely initiation of breast feeding to the mothers who deliver their babies in the hospital (institutional deliveries).

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