

## Breast Feeding Knowledge and Practices in Sialkot

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### ABSTRACT

**Aim:** To evaluate the knowledge of breast feeding and its practices in Sialkot

**Settings:** Islam Teaching Hospital by Department of Paediatrics Islam Medical College, Sialkot

**Duration of study:** from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

**Results:** A total of 167 mothers were interviewed. 150 were included in the study. 76(50.7%) were male and 74(49.3%) were female children. 115(76.7%) were residing in rural area and 35(23.3%) were coming from urban area. The doctor counseled 30(20%) mothers regarding breast feeding, 105(70%) by the relatives and rest(9.3%) by the lady health workers. 13(8.6%) mothers did not breast feed their children at all. 20(13.3%) mother knew that breast feeding should be started within 1<sup>st</sup> hr of birth. Only 13(8.6%) mothers had breast fed their children in first hour of birth. 47(31.3%) mothers breast fed their babies on first day. Only 9 mothers who had LSCS, had breastfed their babies on first day. 90(60%) mothers had breastfed their children on 2<sup>nd</sup> day or later, of these 4 had vaginal delivery and rest by LSCS. 146(97.3%) mothers considered colostrums to be healthy. 103 mothers (68.66%) initiated with exclusive breast feeding. 31(20.66%) children were breast fed only for six months and 20(13.3%) beyond six months, while in 52(34.66%) children exclusive breast feeding was stopped before six months of age. 91.3% were ever given breast feed 47(31.3%) children were never exclusively breastfed and bottle feeding was started since birth. 21(14%) of the children were never given bottle feed. 95(63.3%) mothers used buffalo/cow milk for bottle feeding and of these 53(35.33%) used diluted milk to feed the child.

**Conclusion:** Most of the results in our study are near to the national survey. The knowledge and practice of early breast feeding was very poor. There are variations in different national studies depending on the area, socioeconomic status and regional taboos. Comparing to the international statistics of breast feeding knowledge and practices we are lag far behind and a lot of effort needs to be put in.

**Keywords:** Breast Feeding knowledge, practices, Sialkot

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### INTRODUCTION

Breast feeding is as old as human life. Mother is gifted with breast milk at the time of childbirth of the baby so that baby can get nutrition<sup>1</sup>. Breast feeding is healthy as well as economical.

Neonatal and infant morbidity as well as mortality are reduced by giving breast milk only for initial six months. It also reduces episodes of diarrhea and infections of respiratory tract. **Error! Bookmark not defined..**

In spite of the fact that some countries have improved their breast feeding status but overall the condition is downhill.

The UNICEF and WHO recommendations regarding breastfeeding are: starting breastfeeding immediately after birth within the first hour; breastfeeding only for the first six months; and continuation of breastfeeding for more than two years, along with nutritionally adequate, healthy, age

appropriate, additional semisolid feeding starting in the sixth month.

Breast feeding has innumerable advantages, some are known and others are to be discovered yet. It provides all the nutrients, vitamins and minerals for first six months as well as carrying antibodies especially colostrums which is rich in antibodies. It also contains enzymes and long chain fatty acids. In addition to good survival it also improves cognition and healthy brain development.

Even in breastfed child less than six months of age, introduction of fresh milk or formula milk leads to decreased production of breast milk as babies suck less on the breast with less release of prolactin. Artificial feeding leads to recurrent diarrhea as it is usually contaminated in developing countries. The increased cost of artificial feed leads to its over dilution resulting in malnutrition and related risks.

This study was done to assess the maternal knowledge and its application regarding breast feeding in Sialkot.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was conducted in Islam Teaching Hospital by department of paediatrics Islam Medical College,

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Sialkot. Islam Teaching Hospital is located 12 kilometers from city center. Most of the patients come from adjoining rural area. Most of the rural population is of lower socioeconomic status.

The duration of study was from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. Sampling was convenient based from mothers reporting in child OPD of Islam Teaching hospital. Mothers of children who were 6 months to 24 months of age were selected for interview. Verbal consent was taken. Criteria for breast feeding were according to WHO/UNICEF definitions. Data was collected according to the questionnaire. Mothers who were seriously ill postpartum were excluded as well as those mothers whose children were seriously ill and were admitted in nursery. Adopted children as well as multiple pregnancies were also excluded. Data was entered in electronic base file and analysed with SPSS 21.

## RESULTS

A total of 167 mothers were interviewed. 17 were excluded from the study. Of the excluded 2 were adopted children, 5 were 7 months old quintuplets, 10 were admitted in nursery after birth, 150 were included in the study. 76(50.7%) were male and 74(49.3%) were female children. 115(76.7%) were residing in rural area and 35(23.3%) were coming from urban area. 30(20%) mothers were counseled for breast feeding by the doctor, 105(70%) by the relatives and rest(9.3%) by the lady health workers. 13(8.6%) mothers did not breast feed their children at all. 20(13.3%) mothers had the knowledge that baby should be put to breast immediately for feeding. Only 13(8.6%) mothers had breast fed their children in first hour of birth. 47(31.3%) mothers breast fed their babies on first day. Only 9 mothers who had LSCS, had breastfed their babies on first day. 90(60%) mothers had breastfed their children on 2<sup>nd</sup> day or later, of these 4 had vaginal delivery and rest by LSCS. 146(97.3%) mothers considered colostrums to be healthy. 4 mothers considered it unhealthy. 103(68.66%) were started with exclusive breast feeding and 31(20.66%) children were exclusively breast fed for six months and 20(13.3%) beyond six months. 52(34.66%) children who were started with exclusive breastfeeding but were stopped with breast feeding before six months of age. 91.3% were ever given breast feed. 47(31.3%) children were never exclusively breastfed and bottle feeding was started since birth. 21(14%) of the children were never given bottle feed. 95(63.3%) mothers used buffalo/cow milk for bottle feeding and of these 53(35.33%) used diluted milk to feed the child.

Table 1: Practice of breast feeding

Valid	Frequency	%	Valid%	Cumulative%
1 hr	13	8.7	8.7	8.7
3-4 hrs	18	12.0	12.0	20.7
1st day	16	10.7	10.7	31.3
2 <sup>nd</sup> day or later	90	60.0	60.0	91.3
never	13	8.7	8.7	100.0
Total	150	100	100.0	

Table 2: Age of exclusive Bf- months

Valid	Frequency	%	Valid%	Cumulative%
Never	47	31.3	31.3	31.3
01	8	5.3	5.3	36.7
02	10	6.7	6.7	43.3
03	9	6.0	6.0	49.3
04	13	8.7	8.7	58.0
05	12	8.0	8.0	66.0
06	31	20.7	20.7	86.7
07	6	4.0	4.0	90.7
08	3	2.0	2.0	92.7
09	1	.7	.7	93.3
10	2	1.3	1.3	94.7
11	1	.7	.7	95.3
12	4	2.7	2.7	98.0
18	1	.7	.7	98.7
till date	2	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Age of exclusive bf-months

Valid	Frequency	%	Valid%	Cumulative %
Never	47	31.3	31.3	31.3
01	8	5.3	5.3	36.7
02	10	6.7	6.7	43.3
03	9	6.0	6.0	49.3
04	13	8.7	8.7	58.0
05	12	8.0	8.0	66.0
06	31	20.7	20.7	86.7
07	6	4.0	4.0	90.7
08	3	2.0	2.0	92.7
09	1	.7	.7	93.3
10	2	1.3	1.3	94.7
11	1	.7	.7	95.3
12	4	2.7	2.7	98.0
18	1	.7	.7	98.7
Till date	2	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

## DISCUSSION

Breastfeeding practices are improving in the developed countries whereas these are on decline in our country. The mean duration of breast feeding has declined from 22.8 months in 1975 to 18.3 months in 2007<sup>3</sup>. So on an average children are breast fed for lesser months now as compared to past in Pakistan. Even in India and Bangladesh breastfeeding practices have markedly improved.

Antenatal counseling regarding breast feeding practices improves the outcome. In our study 29.3% mothers received antenatal counseling for breastfeeding from doctor and LHV. In a study in Karachi, 21.9% received antenatal counseling and had better awareness than the non counseled group, in spite of the fact that counseling was not up to mark. In the counseled group early breast feeding was known to 84.5% versus 18.97% in non counseled group. Similarly exclusive breast feeding for six months was known to 76.05% in counseled group versus 22.52% in group without counseling<sup>4</sup>. In a study in Multan 61% of mothers were counseled by the doctors regarding advantages of breast feeding<sup>5</sup>. In a study in India 58.67% mothers were counseled by the doctor resulting in good outcome<sup>6</sup>. 84.47% of women in rural Bangladesh were given advice on breast feeding during antenatal visit<sup>7</sup>. In study in female nursing staff of Islamabad hospitals 95.3% of the nurses were of the view that health professionals should play active role in encouraging/teaching mothers to breast feed<sup>8</sup>.

Breast feeding within 1<sup>st</sup> hour is recommended now. The knowledge to breast feed within 1<sup>st</sup> hour was present in 13.3% of mothers in our study. This percentage is very less as compared to 70.67% in India<sup>6</sup>.

The practice to breastfeed within 1<sup>st</sup> hour was seen in 8.6% of the mothers in our study. During 2012-13 PDH survey breast feeding was started in 1<sup>st</sup> hour in 18% of the babies<sup>9</sup>. 60% of the babies were given breastfeed within 1<sup>st</sup> hour in Gilgit Baltistan as compared to Punjab where only 13% were given breast feed in 1<sup>st</sup> hour. Breast feeding in 1<sup>st</sup> hour was slightly higher in children born in a health facility (16%) than at home (20%)<sup>9</sup>. According to the IYFC country profile for Pakistan early initiation of breast feeding is 24% where as for India and Bangladesh it is 22% and 42% respectively<sup>10</sup>. In other studies this early breast feeding was 54.67%<sup>6</sup> and 56.7%<sup>11</sup>. in india and 56.4% in Bangladesh **Error! Bookmark not defined.** A study in urban city of Surat revealed early initiation of breast feeding in 70% of new born<sup>12</sup>. 64% children were put on breastfeeding within one hour of birth in rural Madhya Pradesh<sup>13</sup>. In a rural area of Mangalore breast feeding was initiated within 1<sup>st</sup> hour in 37.4% of children<sup>14</sup>.

60% mothers had breastfed their children on 2<sup>nd</sup> day or later in our study. It was mainly due to the fact that 60.7% mothers underwent LSCS. Only 9 mothers who had LSCS had breastfed their babies on 1<sup>st</sup> day. LSCS is known to be associated with delayed initiation as well as decreased breast feeding. This decreased breast feeding immediately after birth is due to the fact that 61% mothers

underwent LSCS in our study which is associated with delayed as well as decreased breast feeding.

97.3% of the mothers considered that colostrum is healthy for the babies in our study. A study in Lahore revealed that 72% of the mothers were aware of importance of colostrum<sup>15</sup>. 76.6% of the mothers gave colostrums to the new born in rural area of Mangalore<sup>14</sup>.

Prelacteal feeds were given in 43.3% of children and consisted of honey, tea. It was noted that 75% of the babies were given prelacteal feeds during first three days of life during PDHS 2012-13 **Error! Bookmark not defined.** 24.08% mothers gave prelacteal feeds in rural women in Bangladesh<sup>7</sup>. 29.4% were given pre lacteal feeds in Mangalore<sup>14</sup>.

In our study 47(31.3%) children were given breast feed along with bottle feeding right from birth. 22(14.7%) were given bottle feed exclusively since birth. A study in Lahore revealed that 23.4% did not breast feed their children<sup>16</sup>.

The figure of PSES (1998-99) revealed that 96% of children were ever breast fed in Pakistan<sup>17</sup>. 91.3% of children were ever breast fed in our study which is less as compared to national figure.

31(20.66%) children were exclusively breast fed for six months and 20(13.3%) beyond six months. in our study. PDHS 2012-13 revealed 38% were exclusively breast fed till six months of age. This figure has remained unchanged during the last six years although 2008 national IYFC strategy set a target of increasing it from 37% to 55%. According to IYFC country profile exclusive breast feeding under six months is 37% in Pakistan where as it is 46% for India and 43% for Bangladesh **Error! Bookmark not defined.** Exclusive breast feeding till 6 months was done in 23% of children in low socioeconomic area of Faisalabad<sup>18</sup>. 67% mothers exclusively breast fed their babies in a study in Lahore **Error! Bookmark not defined.** In Hyderabad 68.7% of the mothers exclusively breast fed their children. In rural Bangladesh 70.68% children under six months were exclusively breast fed **Error! Bookmark not defined.** 84.9% of children under six were given exclusive breast feeding in Madhya Pradesh **Error! Bookmark not defined.** In urban community of Surat 50% of children were exclusively breast fed for first six months<sup>12</sup>. 62.2% of siri lankan children were exclusively breast fed for six months<sup>20</sup>. In a study in Mauritius only 17.9% mothers breastfed their children exclusively for the first 6 months<sup>21</sup>.

Before six months 35.33% of children were removed from breast feeding in our study. Thus 70% of children were taking bottle feed by six months. A study in low socioeconomic periurban community of

Karachi revealed bottle feeding rate of 69% in 6 month old children. In a study in rural Bangladesh 28.3% of children under six months of age were given other milk and 17% were taking plain water in addition to breast feed respectively<sup>7</sup>..

In our study 26% of children were given solid, semi- solid or soft food before six months of age.

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