

A Study to Assess the Knowledge and Attitude Towards Breastfeeding Among Primi Antenatal Mothers Attending OBG OPD At Selected Hospital Coimbatore. A Descriptive Cross Sectional Study.

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Abstract—A study to assess the knowledge and attitude towards breastfeeding among primi antenatal mothers attending OBG OPD at selected hospital Coimbatore. A Descriptive Cross sectional study.

Introduction: Breastmilk is the ideal food for infants. It is safe, clean and contains antibodies which help protect against many common childhood illnesses. Breastmilk provides all the energy and nutrients that the infant needs for the first month of life and up to the second year of life. Breastfed children perform better on intelligence tests, are less likely to be overweight or obese and less prone to diabetes later in life. Women who breastfeed also have a reduced risk of breast and ovarian cancers. Appropriate breastfeeding practices prevent mortality and morbidity of the child from diarrhoea, respiratory infections, otitis media and necrotizing enterocolitis. Optimal breastfeeding practices include exclusive breastfeeding for first 6 months of life, early initiation of breastfeeding within 1 hour of life, and continued breastfeeding for upto 2 years of age .The global prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of life is around 48%, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) .**Objective:** To assess the level of knowledge and attitude towards breastfeeding among primi antenatal mothers.and determine the association between demographic variables with knowledge/attitude levels.**Design:** Descriptive Cross sectional study was used.**Sample:** 60 primi antenatal mothers attending OBG OPD and admitted in ward at selected hospital, Coimbatore.**Sampling technique :**Non probability convenience sampling was adopted.**Tools and Scales:** Demographic variables, Knowledge questionnaire and attitude scale about breastfeeding are used. **Result:** In this study, a majority of primi mothers demonstrated a moderately adequate knowledge of breastfeeding (53.3%), 36.6% with adequate knowledge

and 10% with inadequate knowledge. Most participants displayed favorable attitudes (80%), while a smaller number had neutral attitude (20%). Demographic factors like education, employment, and family type significantly influenced these attitudes. Food habits were strongly associated to knowledge levels ($p=0.001$), while education, age, and employment had a weaker association. Importantly, higher knowledge about breastfeeding correlated with more positive attitudes. **Conclusion:** The study highlights the need for structured antenatal education to improve breastfeeding knowledge and foster positive attitudes among first-time mothers. Health professionals, particularly nurses and midwives, play a pivotal role in delivering this education through counseling, visual aids, and interactive sessions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Breastfeeding is a mother's gift to herself, her baby, and the earth." –Pamela K. Wiggins
Breastmilk is the ideal food for infants. It is safe, clean and contains antibodies which help protect against many common childhood illnesses. Breastmilk provides all the energy and nutrients that the infant needs for the first month of life and up to the second year of life. Breastfed children perform better on intelligence tests, are less likely to be overweight or obese and less prone to diabetes later in life. Women who breastfeed also have a reduced risk of breast and ovarian cancers. Appropriate breastfeeding practices prevent mortality and morbidity of the child from diarrhoea, respiratory infections, otitis media and necrotizing enterocolitis. Optimal breastfeeding practices include exclusive breastfeeding for first 6

months of life, early initiation of breastfeeding within 1 hour of life, and continued breastfeeding for upto 2 years of age .The global prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of life is around 48%, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) .National Impact: In India, according to NFHS-6, only 41.5% of mothers initiate breastfeeding within the first hour, and just 43–64% practice exclusive breastfeeding for six months.This indicates a significant gap in early initiation and continued exclusive breastfeeding practices among Indian mothers. It suggests that mothers either lack adequate knowledge or encounter systemic, cultural, or clinical barriers to optimal breastfeeding highlighting the urgent need for targeted education and support interventions. Despite its well-established benefits, many first-time mothers face challenges in initiating and sustaining breastfeeding. These challenges often stem from inadequate knowledge, misconceptions, cultural beliefs, and lack of support.

II. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The beliefs and knowledge of primigravida mothers regarding breastfeeding are still developing, presenting a significant opportunity for education and support. Investigating breastfeeding is essential to identify obstacles such as insufficient knowledge, cultural beliefs, inadequate support systems, and workplace limitations. A deficiency in proper knowledge and attitudes may result in premature cessation or inappropriate breastfeeding practices. This study aims to assess the level of knowledge and attitude towards breastfeeding among primigravida mothers, thereby identifying existing gaps, misconceptions, and prevailing practices, the findings will inform the development of targeted, evidence-based educational interventions to promote optimal breastfeeding behaviors.

Statement Of the Problem

A study to assess the knowledge and attitude towards breastfeeding among primi antenatal mothers attending OBG OPD at selected hospital Coimbatore. A Descriptive Cross sectional study.

Objectives

Primary Objective:

To assess the level of knowledge and attitude towards breastfeeding among primi antenatal mothers.

Secondary Objective:

To determine the association between demographic variables with knowledge/attitude levels.

Assumptions

It is assumed that most mothers are capable of producing sufficient milk with the right support and guidance. Improved knowledge is likely to be associated with a more favorable attitude toward breastfeeding.

III. METHODOLOGY

Quantitative approach-Descriptive cross-sectional design was adopted for this study.The study was conducted in tertiary hospital at Coimbatore. Population of the study are Primi antenatal mothers with 20- 40 weeks of gestation attending OBG OPD at selected hospital.Sample size consists of 60 primi antenatal mothers selected by using non-probability convenience sampling. Data collection tools used are Demographic variables, Knowledge questionnaire and attitude scale. Inclusion criteria were Primi antenatal mothers with gestational age between 20-40 weeks. Demographic data:It includes the age of the mother, religion, educational status, employment status, food habits and type of family. Multiple-choice questions regarding knowledge about benefits of breast feeding, common position of breastfeeding, recommended duration for exclusive breastfeeding, advantages of colostrums, proper techniques of breastfeeding, factors that increase milk production. Total score 100. Scoring according to the 5-point Likert ratingscale .11 questions are positive and 4 questions are negative, strongly agree, agree, Neutral, disagree& strongly disagree. The maximum score was75 and minimum score was 0.A formal authorization was acquired from the ethical committee members of both the college and the hospital. The objectives and methodology of our research project were explained to the antenatal mothers, and their consent was obtained. Data was collected using questionnaires and attitude scales through the interview method. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The mean, frequencies, and percentages were used to describe the demographic data. To determine the relationship/correlation between demographic variables and knowledge / attitude scores, chi square analysis, Pearson correlation was employed. The

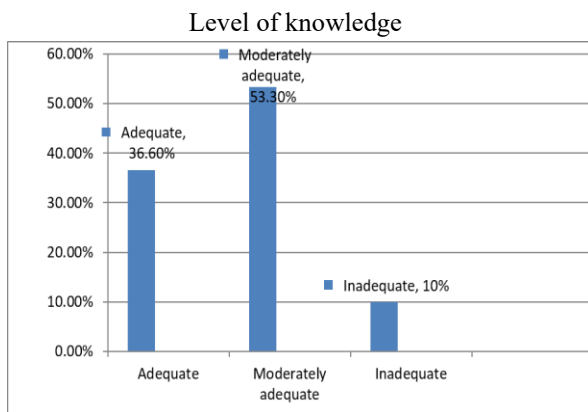
association and link were depicted using scatter plot, box plot and heat maps.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, a majority of primi mothers demonstrated a moderately adequate knowledge of breastfeeding (53.3%), 36.6% with adequate knowledge and 10% with inadequate knowledge. Most participants displayed favorable attitudes (80%), while a smaller number had neutral attitude (20%). Demographic factors like education, employment, and family type significantly influenced these attitudes. Food habits were strongly associated to knowledge levels (p=0.001), while education, age, and employment had a weaker association. Importantly, higher knowledge about breastfeeding correlated with more positive attitudes.

Distribution of respondents according to knowledge scores

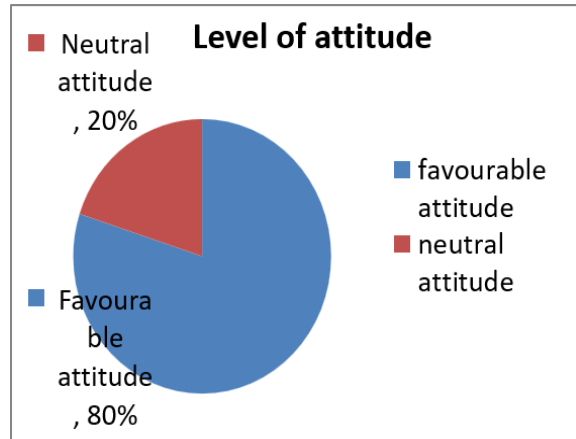
S.NO	Level of knowledge	Score	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Adequate	Above >61	22	36.6%
2	Moderately adequate	31-60	32	53.3%
3	Inadequate	1-30	6	10%



Distribution of respondents according to attitude scores

S.NO	Level of attitude	Score	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Favorable attitude	51-75	48	80%
2	Neutral attitude	26-50	12	20%

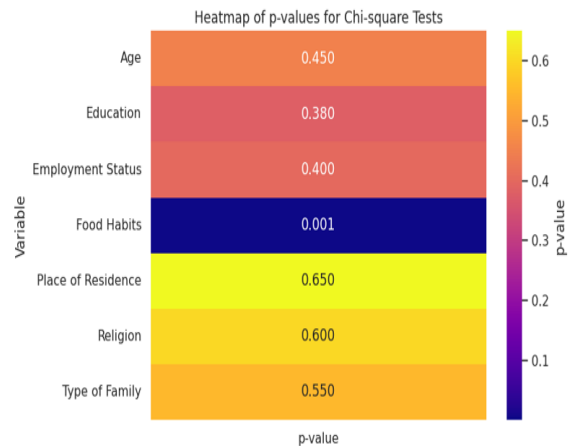
3	Unfavorable attitude	1-25	0	0%
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HEATMAP-Association between demographic variables and knowledge levels:

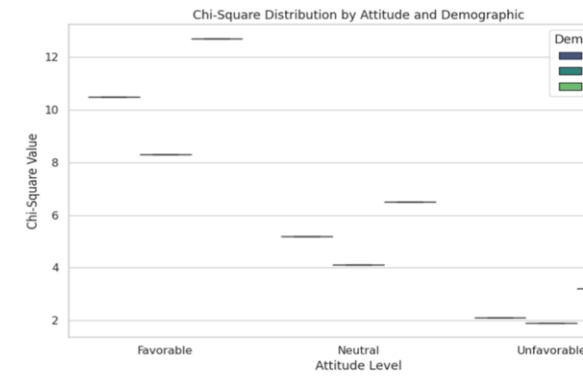
Food Habits show a statistically significant association with the level of knowledge (p = 0.001), suggesting that dietary preferences may influence knowledge levels in this samples. Education, age and employment status has weak association.

Food Habits has a p-value of 0.001 → very dark color → statistically significant.



Box plot -Association between demographic variables and attitude levels

There's a very strong positive linear relationship between knowledge and attitude scores. The p-value is highly significant, indicating that this relationship is statistically robust.



V. CONCLUSION

The study highlights the need for structured antenatal education to improve breastfeeding knowledge and foster positive attitudes among first-time mothers. Health professionals, particularly nurses and midwives, play a pivotal role in delivering this education through counseling, visual aids, and interactive sessions.

Strengthening these efforts within antenatal care settings can lead to improved breastfeeding practices, ultimately contributing to better maternal and child health outcomes.

Ethical consideration

Informed consent secured from the mothers.

Confidentiality of the collected data was maintained. Participation kept voluntary with the right to withdraw.

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