

A Study to Assess Knowledge and Attitude Regarding Infant Feeding Practices Among Mothers Attending Family Clinic and OPD of Tertiary Care Hospital in South Mumbai

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Publication Date: 2025/07/16

Abstract:

➤ Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, with the addition of complementary feeding at six months with continued breastfeeding until at least at age two¹. Infants and young children are at an increased risk of malnutrition from six months of age onwards, when breast milk alone is no longer sufficient to meet all their needs and complimentary feeding should be started². Abandonment of breastfeeding by mothers due to various reasons leads to improper nutritional status of the child³.

➤ Methodology

A descriptive approach using convenient sampling technique was used. The data was collected by structured interview tool from mothers who attended the family clinics and OPD of the hospital.

➤ Results

It was found that 88% of mothers have knowledge that the first feed of the baby is breast milk and 54.04% of them fed their babies two hourly. Only 76.10% had fulfilled the criteria of exclusive breast feeding. There is no significant relation between knowledge and demographic variables like parity and mother's education (p value >0.05).

➤ Conclusion

The study finding implies that all mothers received adequate information regarding infant feeding practices from community resources. It is recommended to place emphasis on educating the mothers on certain areas where knowledge was found to be below expectation.

Keywords: Breast Feeding, Weaning, Knowledge of Mother.

How to Cite: Anjali. V; Kanchan Pal; Athira V; Ashima M; Aruna KR (2025) A Study to Assess Knowledge and Attitude Regarding Infant Feeding Practices Among Mothers Attending Family Clinic and OPD of Tertiary Care Hospital in South Mumbai. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 10(7), 792-796. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25jul585>

I. INTRODUCTION

Breast feeding is the best for mother and baby as known since ancient times⁴. WHO strongly recommends initiation of breast feeding in the first hour of life, exclusive breast feeding till the completion of six months and introduction of appropriate, adequate, hygienically prepared, home-made,

mashed complimentary foods at the end of six months and to continue breastfeeding till second birthday³. Even though policies and remedies are adopted the impact of breastfeeding is not significant. There is a need to identify the clear reasons why this time tested practices are becoming difficult for the mothers to follow. Moreover, the need of the study was also felt to find out the gravity of this problem in our setup among

dependents of service personnel by assessing the knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding Infant feeding practices.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

A total of 159 interviews were conducted using convenient sampling technique from mothers of children between the age group of 6 to 18 months. This prospective, descriptive study was conducted by interviewing randomly selected mothers from among those attending Family Clinic or Pediatric OPD of a tertiary care center, South Mumbai.

The questionnaire prepared by the research group was validated by testing for consistency and relevance at the Department of Pediatrics and College of Nursing. It consisted of three parts, demographic data, questionnaire to assess knowledge regarding infant feeding, and questionnaire on attitude regarding infant feeding.

➤ Inclusion Criteria

159 mothers selected randomly from all mothers with children of 06-18 months of age attending Family Clinic or OPD of Pediatric department of tertiary care hospital were included in the study.

➤ Exclusion Criteria

- Children with congenital malformation.
- Mothers with known psychological disorders.
- Mothers who do not understand English or Hindi.

III. RESULTS

In our study out of a total of 159 mothers, 64% had good knowledge (61-80% correct answers to questionnaire), 08 % fair knowledge (41-60% correct answers) and only 05% mothers had poor knowledge (21-40% correct answers) on infant feeding. The prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding was found to be 76.10%. Majority of mothers felt that breast feeding should be initiated immediately after birth or within one hour of birth (78.61%). Majority (64.15%) of mothers were ready to feed their baby when baby gave cues for feed, whereas 2.52% of them said they would give pacifiers to soothe their babies. Majority of mothers (50.3%) believed that they should feed their baby as often as baby wants, whereas 6.92% of them felt the frequency of breast feeding is to be less than 6 times in 24 hours. The education of the respondents did not influence the knowledge level regarding Infant Feeding Practices, there was no statistically significant difference between those with Graduate degree and those who were matric pass.

IV. DISCUSSION

A total number of 159 interviews were obtained. Among these, maximum mothers were of the age group 25-29 years of age (Table -1); 60.38% of mothers were primipara. Majority of interviewed mothers were professionals (Table - 2). Majority of mothers felt that breast feeding should be initiated immediately after birth or within one hour of birth (78.61%), which is much higher than the study conducted at Nigeria, in which 53 % mothers initiated breastfeeding immediately after birth.⁵ An article published on the topic of exclusive breastfeeding in which WHO states that exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months have several advantages over exclusive breastfeeding for 3 -4 months.⁶ A study conducted on optimal duration of exclusive breastfeeding revealed that babies who were exclusively breastfed for 6 months or more experience less morbidity from GI infections and demonstrate better growth.⁷ There was high prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding (76.10%) in our study (Figure- 1), which was substantially higher than the finding in a similar study which revealed only 9%^{8,9}. The high rates of initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of life and exclusive breastfeeding till 06 months could be related to high female literacy rates and high institutional deliveries in the study population. Another Nigerian study revealed that the major constraints for exclusive breastfeeding are maternal health problems and fear of babies becoming addicted to breastmilk, whereas in our study, inadequacy of breastmilk is felt by mothers as a major constraints to exclusive breastfeeding (51.45%)¹⁰. It is interesting to note that a study from coastal South India shows that 77.5 % mothers started complimentary feeding at recommended time of six months.¹¹ In our study 61.64% of mothers started weaning at recommended time, as they felt it is good for the baby, whereas only 31.45% felt their own breast milk inadequate as a reason to start weaning. It shows similar results in the study, where 25.5% mothers started weaning since they felt their milk was inadequate and 14.9% because of sucking problem.¹² Awareness regarding Infant Feeding Practices influence the feeding pattern of the child. Majority of the mothers (54.09%) were aware of the correct feeding pattern ie, to feed the child every two hourly initially. However, this finding of our study is low when compared to the finding of Veni Irudaya, where 75 % of the study group had awareness of the correct frequency of breastfeeding.¹³ Most of the mothers got encouragement to choose breastfeeding from mothers (48.43%). This holds similarity to the study¹³, where 47% of the mothers got support from family members to start and effectively continue breastfeeding. A high proportion (64%) of mothers in our study had good knowledge as shown by scores between 61-80%, the exact scoring pattern is depicted in Figure - 2. Majority of the mothers (50.3%) believed they should feed their baby as often as baby wants, whereas 6.92% of them felt the frequency of breastfeeding as less than 6 times. There was no association between selected demographic variables and knowledge of the mothers regarding infant feeding practices (p value >0.05).

This indicates that all mothers received adequate information regarding Infant Feeding Practices from the community resources. This study identifies areas that require extra attention, where mothers scored less ie, duration of breastfeeding, the importance of colostrums and the importance of weaning. This finding indicates that dissemination of information on breastfeeding in detail, at the individual level is crucial.

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Table 1 : Age Distribution of Mothers. (n=159)

MATERNAL EDUCATION	PERCENTAGE (%)
20 - 24	23.90
25 - 29	55.34
30 - 34	18.86
35 - 39	1.80

Table 2 : Educational Status of Primigravida Mothers. (n=159)

MATERNAL EDUCATION	PERCENTAGE (%)
Illiterate	1.27
Primary	3.77
Secondary	38.36
Professional	56.60

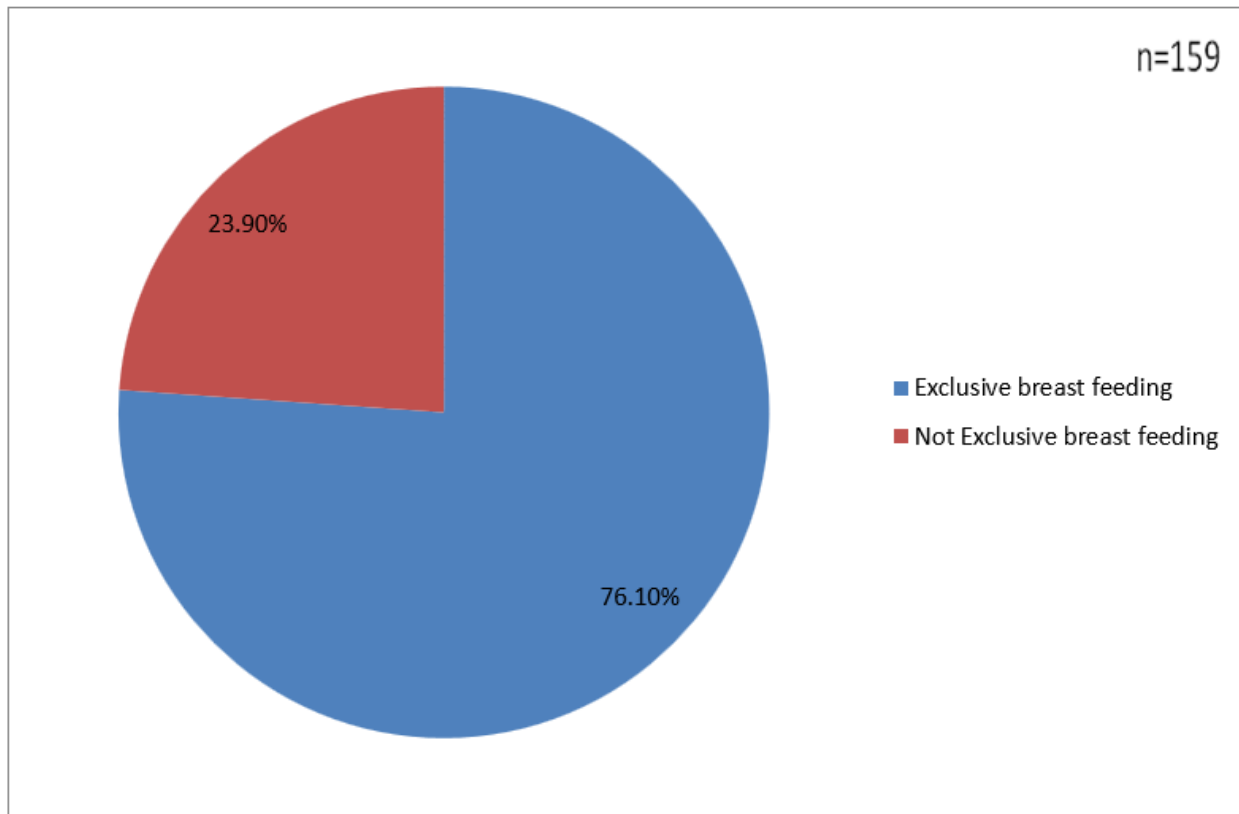


Fig 1 : Percentage of Exclusive Breastfeeding

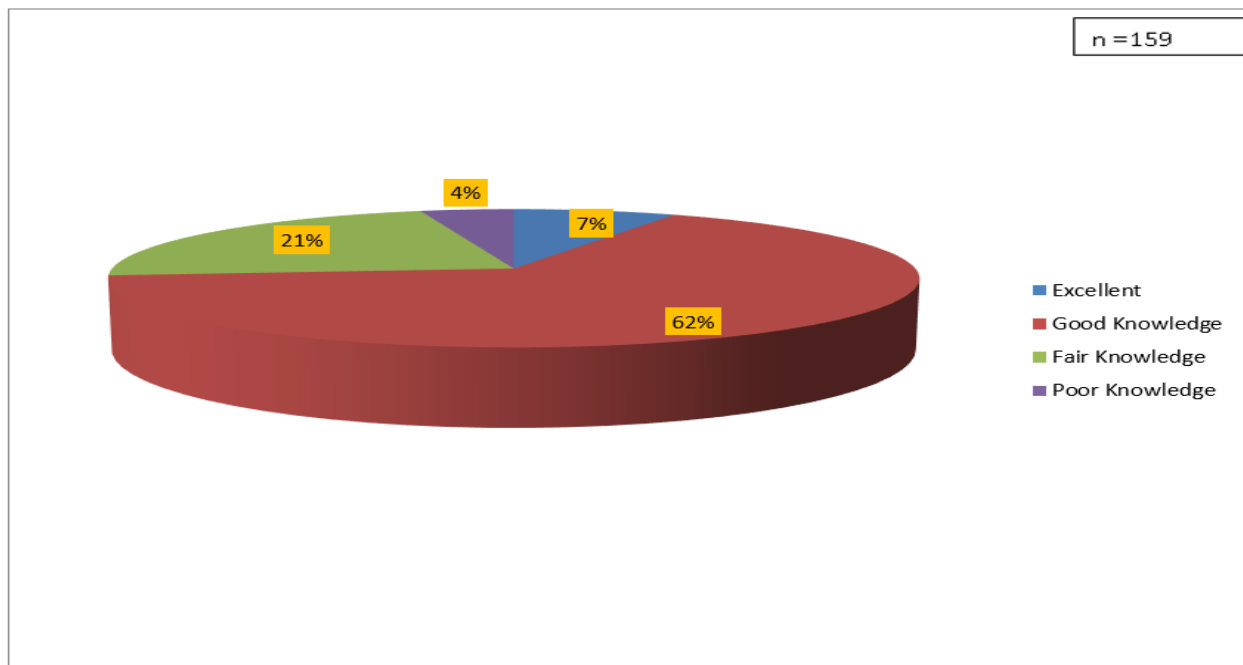


Fig 2 : Percentage Distribution of Knowledge of the Samples Regarding Infant Feeding Practices.

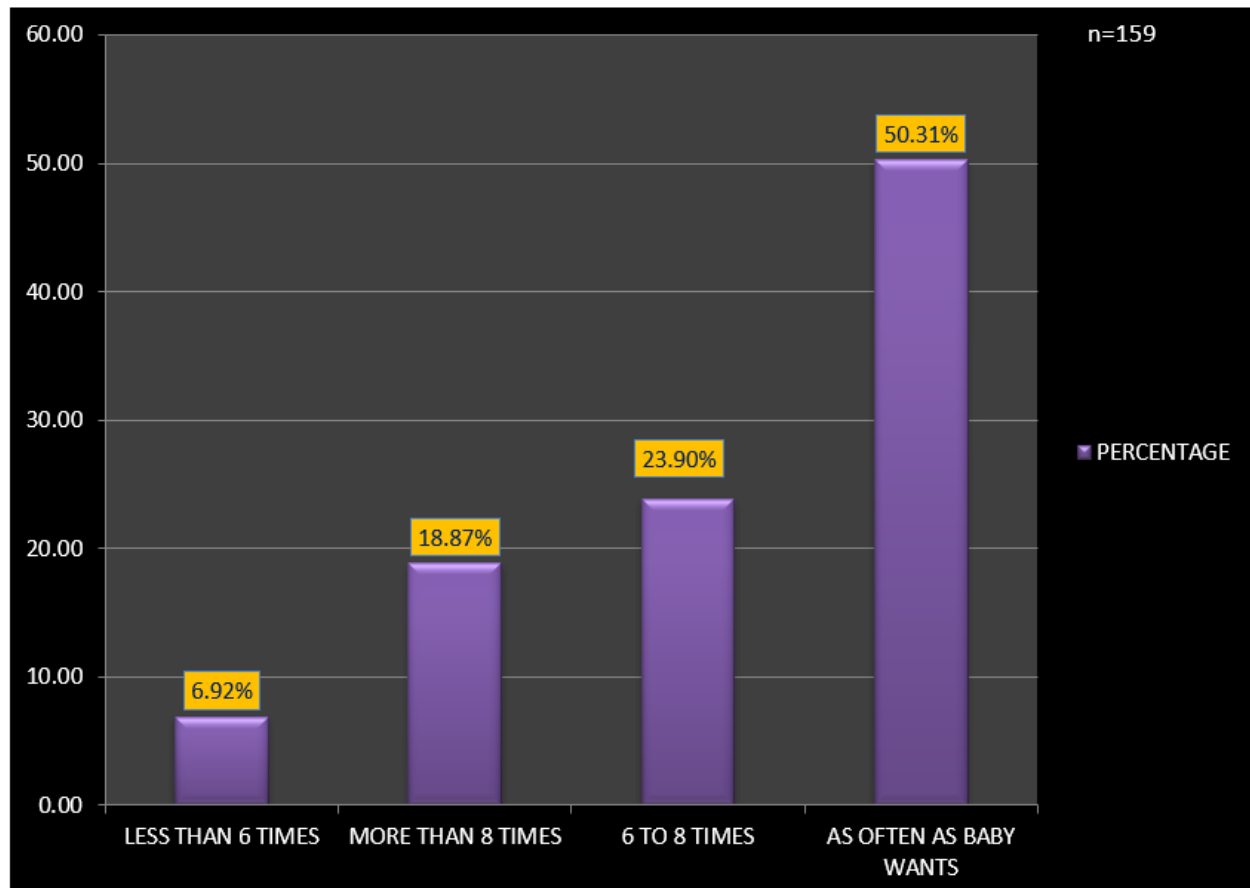


Fig 3 : Frequency of Breastfeeding