

DECLINE IN BREAST-FEEDING: WHAT ARE THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE?

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Breast-feeding is on decline (1,2). The objective of this study is to determine factors responsible for discontinuation of continued breast-feeding among mothers.

Design: Community-based, Descriptive and cross sectional household survey

Place and Duration of Study: This study was carried out in different localities of urban area of city, Dera Ismail Khan during month of July 2003.

Subjects and Methods: It is cross-sectional study, interviewing one hundred and seventy six samples consisting of mothers who discontinued breastfeeding before 2 years.

Questionnaire was constructed on basis of focuss group discussion . Informations was collected and then analyzed.

Statistical Analysis: Descriptive statistical methods.

Results: The result of this mini-survey showed a major reason behind the discontinuation of breastfeeding at early period is having “not enough milk” in their breasts (54 %).

The second major reason say that their babies were not feeling well after receiving their breast milk (23 %).

Other reasons discovered in this study is that their babies were still feeling hungry after breast fed (10 %), difficult to give enough time for lactation as doing work outside home (6 %), fear of loss of physical attraction (4 %) and milk dried up (3 %)

Conclusion: Breastfeeding is important determinant of nutritional status of child which in turn influences growth and development of child

In future, breastfeeding promotion campaign may include stress on continued breastfeeding and underlying barriers as explored in this study should be fully addressed.

INTRODUCTION

The benefits of breastfeeding for child and mothers in terms of nutrition, immunological protection, anti-infective, biochemical, anti-allergic, ant-cancer and contraceptive effects and emotional satisfaction have been recognized by public health experts and communities.

Despite declaration of clear benefits of breastfeeding, worldwide breastfeeding rates continue to decline. Exclusive breastfeeding(giving no other food or drink)is even less common (5) Less than optimal breast-feeding practices have negative impact on child and family health. (2,4)

In Pakistan, the breast feeding initiation rate is about 95%, however prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding is alarmingly low, only 16 % of mothers exclusively breastfeed their children up to 4 months, 31 % complementary feeding , 56 % continued breastfeeding up to 24 month. (6)

There is a need to better understand the barriers to adopt breastfeeding practice (3).

It is intended to conduct a study among target population with objective to ascertain reasons for discontinuation of breastfeeding before 2 years.

It will help develop better understanding of perception of mothers regarding breastfeeding. It will explore the barriers causing hindrance to breastfeeding practice and thus making basis for policy makers to address these issues while formulating intervention strategies in breast-feeding program.

MATERIALS & METHODS

This cross-sectional study was conducted in target population of mothers who discontinued breastfeeding practice before 2 years. This study is based on a sample size of 176, selected on

purposive sampling method which is a non-random sampling technique where samples are selected because investigator presumes that they are typical of that study population.

Study design: Community based , descriptive, and cross sectional household survey

Setting: mothers who discontinued breastfeeding before 2 years, residing in different localities of urban area of city, Dera Ismail Khan.

A questionnaire was constructed in the light of focus group discussion with intension to explore possible reasons for avoiding breastfeeding practice. Targets respondents are interviewed with this structured questionnaire. Questionnaire was designed in a way that they can be asked by a trained field worker without health care experience. Questions were mostly close- ended.

Pilot testing of questionnaire was also carried out. The field workers undergone training specific to study in District Resource Centre, Aurat Foundation Dera Ismail Khan, to ensure they understand all the questionnaire and will deliver them in a standardized way and are able to record answers adequately.

Informations regarding continued breastfeeding was collected.

Statistical analysis: Descriptive Data analysis was performed

RESULTS

Mother’s ages range in selective samples are 21-54 years (mean age 31 years) and 84% of them were literate with minimum criteria of being able to read or write.

97 % were aware of advantages of breastfeeding. All of them initiated breast-feeding in initial days but later on they quitted breast-feeding before 2 years.

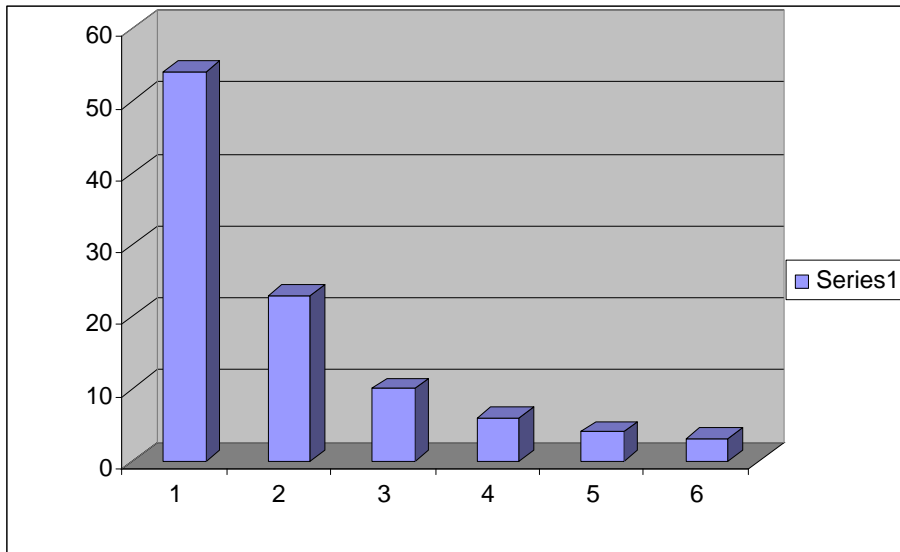
The result of survey showed a major reason (54 %) behind the discontinuation of breast-feeding at early period is having “not enough milk” in their breasts. Among these mothers ,32% think that their small breast size is responsible while remaining mothers think the cause is their poor body nourishment either due to having some disease (28 %) or can not affordable to purchase extra food needed for their nourishment.

The second major reason (23 %) say that their babies were not feeling well after receiving their breast milk. Among them 40 % had pain abdomen, 36 % gas formation and 25 % noticed abnormal bowel habits in their babies.

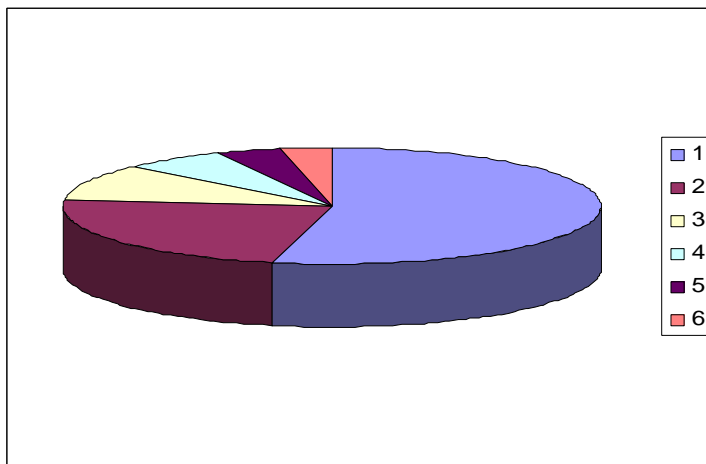
Other reasons discovered in this study are that their babies were still feeling hungry after breast fed (10 %), difficult to give enough time for lactation as doing work outside home (6 %), fear of loss of physical attraction (4 %) and milk dried up (3 %)

FACTORS	NUMBER OF OBSERVATION	PERCENTAGE
Not enough milk	95	54
Bay not feeling well after breast fed	40	23
Baby feeling hungry after breast fed	18	10
Not enough time for lactation as doing work outside	11	6
Fear of loss of physical attraction	7	4
Milk dried up	5	3
Total	176	100

Figure 1



- 1 = Not enough milk
- 2 = Baby not feeling well after breast fed
- 3 = Baby feeling hungry after breast fed
- 4 = Not enough time for lactation as doing work outside
- 5 = Fear of loss of physical attraction
- 6 = Milk dried up



- 1 = Not enough milk
- 2 = Baby not feeling well after breast fed
- 3 = Baby feeling hungry after breast fed
- 4 = Not enough time for lactation as doing work outside
- 5 = Fear of loss of physical attraction
- 6 = Milk dried up

DISCUSSION

This small study explored many interesting underlying significant barriers for continued breast-feeding. It may provide help to policy makers to target these barriers while formulating breast-feeding promotion campaign.

Similar study parameters were also investigated in a broad-based survey conducted in all provinces of Pakistan. Major reasons in discontinuation of breast-feeding were “milk dried up” 19 % and “refusal by baby” 12.1 %. (1)

Our study, conducted in urban area with 84 % educated respondents communicated a better perception “not enough milk” rather “milk dried up”.

The limitation of our study is confinement to urban population while strength of this study is focus group discussion.

There are many interesting myths of mothers explored in our limited study because here focus group discussion was arranged before to highlight multiple possible factors responsible for dilemma of discontinuation of breastfeeding. These factors were incorporated in construction of questionnaire.

CONCLUSION

Breast-feeding is important determinant of nutritional status of child which in turn influences growth and development of child. (7)

Breastfeeding is still high prevalent but mothers usually stop breastfeeding early before 2 years. In future, all breastfeeding promotion campaign must include stress on continued breastfeeding and underlying barriers as explored in this study should be fully addressed.

It is suggested that more large scale studies including rural population should be carried out to further explore these parameters in detail.

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