

ORIGINAL ARTICLE**Prospective KAP study of Working Mothers regarding Feeding Their Children**

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Introduction

Infant feeding practices play important role in growth and development and overall health. A global target of increasing exclusive breastfeeding at least 50% by the year 2025 was set by WHO for infants under 6 months. However many mothers introduce supplementary foods before 6 months. Breast milk provides all necessary nutrients and antibodies to support the infant's immune system and development¹. WHO and UNICEF recognized and recommended exclusive breastfeeding for up to 6 months. Breast milk contains essential nutri-

ants and antibodies that are very essential for infant's health and immunity and also for infant's growth and development. It is also noted that the breastfed infants experience fewer infections and chronic illness compared to those fed on formula or other supplements².

Exclusive breastfeeding rates are very low all over the world but as compared to West this ratio is low in Pakistan. In Pakistan, national surveys indicate that while most mothers initiate breast feeding but this practice declines with time and it becomes

very less at the end of 4 month and in some cases at the end of 5th month³.

Education plays very important role in breastfeeding, mothers with high education are most likely to breastfed their child for the first 4 months at least, as compared to those with less education³.

Antenatal and post natal counseling also plays important role in mothers knowledge and produce awareness among societies.

There are so many researches that explored feeding practices in 1 year of life or up to six months. This limited research focuses only on (1 to 4) months, so doesn't highlight the unique challenges faced during the first few months³.

Objectives

The present study aimed to access the mother's exclusive breastfeed actual weaning and feeding knowledge and practices used with their infants and the factors influencing mothers for the choice of feeding methods.

Methodology

A prospective study was carried out on registered patients presented in Allama Iqbal Memorial Teaching Hospital/ KMSMC, Sialkot in the OPD and in KMSMC Officers during the month of February, 2025 and 60 mothers were included in sample according to convenience sampling technique.

Results

Educational level of mother :

About 95% of mothers had higher education (which included consultants, working House officers, medical officers, professors, nurses etc)

About 5% had no education at all which included the mothers from sweeping staff.

Primary method of feeding:

About 61 % mothers exclusively breastfed their infant, about 8% exclusively used formula milk and about 30% used both breast-milk and formula combined.

Frequently of how often infant was fed:

Almost 92% mothers fed their infant every 2-3 hours and only 8% of them were feeding on demand or less than that interval.

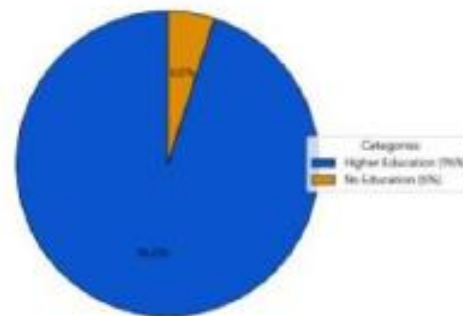
The belief that exclusive breastfeeding is sufficient for first 4 months or not :

Almost 94 % mothers agreed on fact that breastfeeding is sufficient for their infant in initial months but 6% contraindicated on this belief.

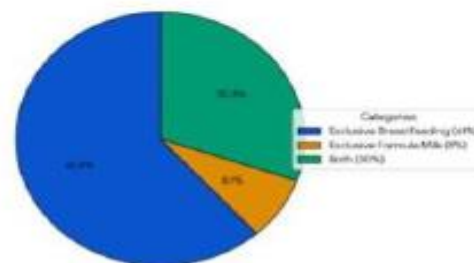
Whether they received guidelines on feeding practices:

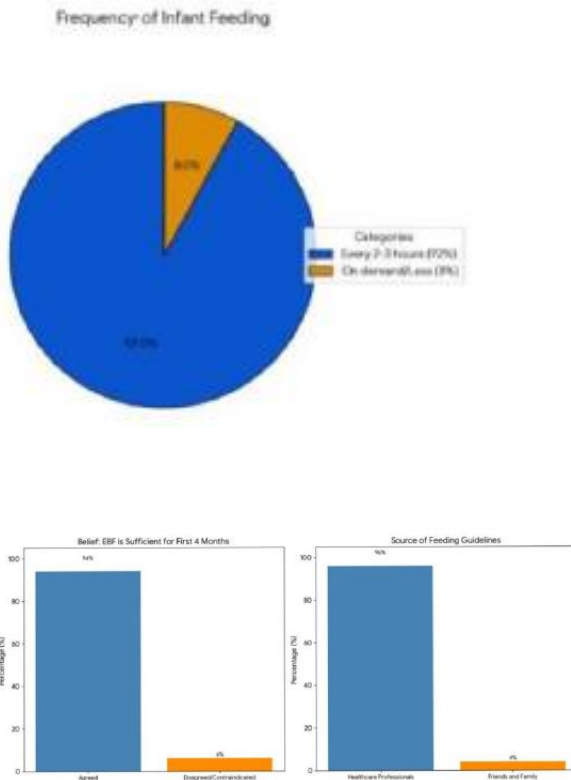
About 96% received guidelines from both healthcare professionals and 4% received advices from friends and family.

Educational Level of Mother



Primary Method of Feeding (Total = 99%)





Discussion

We found that the 95% mothers having higher education and give their babies breastfeeding at home and expressed breast milk is given at home when they are on duty so the 61% of babies are getting exclusive breast feed.

About 95% of mothers had higher education, about 5% had no education at all, about 61 % mothers exclusively breastfed their infant, almost 94 % mothers agreed on fact that breastfeeding is sufficient for their infant in initial months but 6% contraindicated on this belief and About 96% received guidelines from both healthcare professionals and 4% received advices from friends and family.

Finding of our study our study match with the finding of Jain A. et al., Haris AB et all. and Hua J. et al.^{4,5,6}

Conclusion

Almost all mothers agreed that breast-feeding was sufficient for their infant since they that had proper guidelines due to their educational status and work place but since they had to work for consecutive hours , so they couldn't breastfeed their infant at regular intervals and most had to use formula milk too.

LIMITATIONS:

This study focuses only on one to 4 months of infants, so it will not cover older infants and result is limited due to sample size.

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Conflict of Interest: None

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