

Assessing the consequences of a mother's occupational profile on breastfeeding throughout the first six months: Research Article

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Abstract

Background several studies have found that maternal work during the first 6 months of an infant's life is a significant obstacle to breastfeeding for the full 6 months. Breastfeeding has several health benefits for both children and mothers, including reduced infections, higher cognitive development, lower rates of child obesity, decreased risk of postpartum depression, and lower rates of breast and ovarian cancer for women. Aim Evaluate the impact of mother's job status on breast-feeding practices among mothers at Mohali, Punjab India.

Subjects and Methods Outpatient women in gynecological and pediatric clinics with children under one year old (working and non-working) comprised the sample size of 100 mothers (76 working and 24 non-working).

Conclusion In a survey of working mothers, less than half (44.5%) practiced on-demand breastfeeding, 96.6% used pacifiers, 73.4% did not express breast milk during work hours, and most reported a decrease in breastfeeding times per day. Additionally, 87.5% reported an increase in infant morbidity.

Key words: Exclusive Breast Feeding, Mothers employment, childhood morbidities, Cognitive development.

Introduction

The countrywide Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), conducts a countrywide household survey called the Periodic Labour Force Survey to determine the employment status of women in India. Without a doubt, India's female labor force participation (FLFPR) rate, which refers to women who are either working or seeking for employment, has been below the worldwide average of 47 percent for many years. Over time, women's empowerment has led to more job opportunities. Though it is still below the world average, it is gradually improving. According to the most recent Periodic Labour Force Survey for 2021-22, the FLFPR for the prime working age group (15 years or older) has significantly grown and increased 32.8% in 2024.

Breastfeeding has several benefits for both children and mothers, including reduced infections, higher cognitive development, lower rates of child obesity, decreased risk of postpartum depression, and lower risks of breast and ovarian cancer for women

The World Health Organization (WHO) advises exclusive breastfeeding for six months, followed by supplementary breastfeeding for two years and beyond. Several studies have found that maternal work, especially throughout the first 6 months of an infant's life, is a significant obstacle to breastfeeding beyond 6 months.

The Aim

The aim is to find the real impact of the maternal employment on breast feeding among mothers in Mohali private hospitals, also assess the relationship between mother's state of employment whether she is working or not and efforts to promote breastfeeding among mothers are being evaluated along with the impact of mother's work status. Examine the impact of a mother's job status on breastfeeding practices.

Subjects and Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted at Mohali, Punjab, India private hospitals, gynaecology and paediatrics clinics for mothers with children under one year old, both working and not working. Mothers with systematic diseases (cardiac, renal, hepatic, pulmonary) that prevent breastfeeding were excluded. The sample size was 100 moms, with 76 working and 24 not working. This study used an interview questionnaire, adapted from the voluntary's mothers. Two academic professors and an associate professor reviewed the document for content and construction correctness. The acquired data was analyzed using SPSS 20.0. Categorical data were presented as numbers and percentages. The appropriate tests of significance were determined. To compare groups, the Chi-square test or Fisher's exact test were used as needed. The odds ratio and 95% confidence interval were computed. The McNemar test was used to compare breastfeeding behaviour among working moms before and after their return to work. The acceptable threshold of significance in this study was 0.05 ($p < 0.05$)

Results:

Table 01- frequency distribution of socio-demographic characteristics among studied groups

Socio-demographic characteristic		Total (n=100)
Age\year	20	4.4%
	20<25	27.8%
	25<30	28%
	30<35	26.2%
	35<40	13.6%
Residence	Rural	30.2%
	Urban	69.8%
Education	University	64.6%
	Secondary School	22.2%
	Preparatory	5%
	Primary	3.2%
	Illiterate	5%
Social Class	Low	7.8%
	Middle	70.4%
	High	21.8%
Working State	Working	76.8%
	Non-Woking	23.2%

Table 2 (Frequencies of breast-feeding characteristics among studied population (n=100))

Breast Feeding Characteristics		N.	Percentage
Know the mean of exclusive breast feeding	Yes	52	50.6%
	No	48	49.4%
Source of this knowledge (n=52)	Doctor	26	14.6%
	Mother	18	13%
	Internet	15	12%
	Friend	14	3.8%
	Work	3	0.8%
	Study	17	6.4%
	Time of initiation after delivery	≤1h	22
>1h		78	77.6%
On demand	Yes	56	56.2%
	No	44	43.8%
Giving pacifiers	Yes	86.6	86.6%
	No	13	13.4%
Times \day	5-8	89.9	89.4%
	9-12	10	10.6%
Initiation of complementary feeding	At 4 months	57.6	57.6%
	4-< 6	19.8	19.8%
	≥6	22.6	22.6%

Table 3(Frequencies of practices after return to work among working mothers (77)

Breast Feeding Practices		N.	%
Initiation of Complementary Feeding	At 4 Months	60	74%
	4-<6	14	18%
	≥6	6	8.1
On demand	Yes	34	44.5%
	No	43	55.5%
Pacifiers	Yes	74	96.6%
	No	3	3.4%
Rooming in	Yes	77	100%
	No	0	0%
Breast Milk Expression	Yes	21	26.6%
	No	57	73.8%

Table (4) Comparison between on demand breast feeding practice before and after return to work among working group(n=40)

The polled moms varied in age from 25 to <30 years old, with 69.8% coming from metropolitan areas. People with a university education signify 64.6%. The majority of moms (70.4%) are from middle-class families. Breastfeeding was done on-demand. The majority of mothers (86.6%) supplied pacifiers. Most mothers (89.4%) breastfeed every day.

They fed their children 5–8 times every day. Over half of mothers (57.6%) began supplementary feeding at four months. The majority of working mothers (74%), began supplementary feeding at four months. Less than half (44.5%) nursed on demand, 96.6% used pacifiers, and 73.4% didn't express breast milk at work. 100% of mothers practiced rooming in. The vast majority of working mothers (85.4%) reported a decrease in breastfeeding times per day, with 87.5% reporting this.

The study found that 76.8% of moms were employed. Over 50% of the moms (50.6%) were aware of the average duration of exclusive breast feeding, with 14.6% obtaining this information from the doctor. Most moms (77.6%) started breastfeeding after more than an hour of birth, whereas more than half (56.2%) did so sooner.

There was an increase in newborn morbidity. The majority of caregivers (54.9%) were family members. Of those polled, over half (52.1%) considered leaving their kid for a period of two years, while one-third (37.2%) did not. The study found a significant correlation between work status and breast-feeding characteristics such as exclusive, on-demand, pacifier use, times of day, and initiation of complementary feeding (p-value =.000). (P=.000), just over half of working mothers (46.2%) who practiced immediately breast feeding before to restarting to work were able to continue doing so after returning.

The administration of pacifiers before and after returning to work differed significantly ($P=.000$). 95.5% of parents who had not given their infants reassurance before returning to work done so later.

A substantial difference was seen between on-demand breast feeding practices before and after returning to work.

Discussion

The survey discovered that 28% of the mothers polled were among the ages of 25 and under 30. Graduates from colleges account for 64.6%. It demonstrated that 76.8% of mothers worked. A study discovered that 76.1% of participants were above the age of 30, 71.7 percent had attended college or higher education, and 74.3% were employed. [6]The poll revealed that 50.6% of respondents were aware of the median period of exclusive breastfeeding. This contradicts a study conducted in Ethiopia on employed and jobless mothers that compared exclusive breastfeeding in the two groups. The vast majority of participants (93.6%) comprehended the idea of exclusive breastfeeding. The variation can be linked to educational disparities.

Level of participation. [7] In this survey, doctors (14.6%) were the primary source of participants' information regarding exclusive breast feeding, followed by mothers (13%), with work (0.8%) being the least prevalent source. A survey indicated that 62.7 percent of moms learned about exclusive breastfeeding via health institutes. The majority of participants (77.6%) started breastfeeding after more than an hour of delivery.

According to a research, moms who started nursing during the first hour of delivery account for 67% of all mother-infant pairs. The survey found that 56.2% of moms practiced on-demand breastfeeding. This is in line with a research. The study found that 66.6 percent of women nursed their babies on demand [7]. The survey revealed that the majority of moms (86.6%) offered their infants pacifiers. The study done in Qatar found that only 16.2% of women offered pacifiers to their newborns, which might be attributed to socioeconomic class and cultural factors. [9]The survey found that 89.4% of moms fed their infants 5-8 times each day.

A research in Ghana indicated that the average daily breastfeeding frequency was 11 ± 2.7 , with a median of 13.5. However, this may be attributable to cultural and socioeconomic class differences. The survey found that 89.4% of moms fed their infants 5-8 times each day.

This was less than reported by a research done. In Ghana, the average daily breastfeeding frequency was 11 ± 2.7 , with a median of 13.5. This range might be attributed to cultural and socioeconomic differences. [8]The study found that 57.6% of women started supplemental feeding at the age of 4 months. According to a survey, just 26.4% of moms reported exclusive nursing, while 50.2% provided supplemental help cow milk to their kid before six months of age [7]. The survey found that 73.4% of working moms do not express breast milk at work. A research found that 95.6% of women do not express breast milk at work, which is consistent with this. [10]The survey found that all moms practice rooming in.

In contrast, a survey done in Qatar found that just 43.9% of mothers room together. [9]This can be interpreted. Different nations have distinct cultures and socioeconomic classes. This study found a strong link between job status and understanding of exclusive breastfeeding. P -value = .000, OR = 2.25 (1.46-3.46). 55.2% of working moms are aware of the average rate of

exclusive breastfeeding 64.7% of non-working mothers were unaware of the average duration of exclusive breastfeeding. A research indicated that the majority of respondents (96.3% employed and 91%). Unemployed moms have knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding. Almost all women, 99.1% employed and 92.6% unemployed, were aware of the required period for exclusive breastfeeding. Only a small percentage of moms (1.5% employed and 9% unemployed) believed infants should exclusively breastfeed for less than 6 months, respectively. The majority of respondents (89.4% employed and 53.5% unemployed) were informed about exclusive breastfeeding. [11] This study found that working mothers are less prone to EBF. The study found that 74% of working women commenced supplemental feeding at 4 months.

Conclusion

The majority of working women (74%) started supplemental feeding at 4 months. Less than half (44.5%) practiced. Of those who demanded nursing, 96.6% used pacifiers. However, the majority (73.4%) did not express their breast milk at work. Most working women reported fewer nursing periods per day and a rise in baby morbidities (87.5%). There was a significant correlation between work status and breastfeeding characteristics, including knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding, on-demand breastfeeding, pacifier use, breastfeeding times, and initiation of complementary feeding. Additionally, there was a significant difference in on-demand breast feeding practices before and after returning to work. Educate moms during prenatal care visits and social media about the necessity of commencing breastfeeding as soon as feasible, within a half hour after birth. Encourage moms to practice on-demand nursing as well as exclusive breastfeeding throughout the first 6 months of their infant's life.

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