
Summary

Breast feeding is an unequalled way of providing ideal food for the healthy growth and development of infants , and has a unique biological and emotional influence on the health of both mother and infant . The anti - infective properities of breast milk helps to protect infants against disease , especially when the infant is exclusively breast fed for the first 4 -6 months of life .

The koran provides clear rules governing breast feeding and the adoption of a wet nurse if for unavoidable reasons , the mother is unable to continue breastfeeding .

The aim of this study was to assess the effect of maternal counselling on the incidence and continuation of breast feeding .

This study was carried out on two groups of mothers , each group consisted of 50 primigravidas , attending the ante-natal department of obstetric and MCH Centers of Benha University Hospital . The first group was considered as study group , while the second was the control group.

An initial pilot study was carried out on ten mothers and " not included in the research sample " to assess mother's knowledge about breast feeding , and the revised form of this questionnaire was used twice , once as a pre -counselling during the ante-natal period and the another time as a post - counselling (1 week - 4 weeks - 8 weeks) post-partm . This was filled by the researcher . The data were collected over a period of six months , which started in first April 1998 and ended by 30 September 1998 . A follow up was done for two months post - partum .

The counselling or teaching was delivered to the study group mothers during the ante-natal period and continued throughout the first two months post-partum. A hand out manual used by the researcher included all necessary information about breast feeding , was given only to the study group mothers to be used as a personal reference , after its content was explained to them.

The most important findings of the study could be summarized in the following points :-

1- Most of the mothers in both groups aged between 20 - 35 years , at different educational level . (38%) of the study group were working mothers versus (28%) in the control group . The analysis of the above mentioned data showed no significant difference among the two groups . The study and control groups were considered well matched .

2- Although no significant difference was found pre- Counselling between both groups , the analysis of post - counselling sessions revealed a statistically significant increase in knowledge in the study group (74%) in relation to pre counselling (28%) .

3- The majority of mothers in both groups initiated breast feeding by the third day (85%) pre counselling versus (64%) in the study group initiated breast feeding immediately after birth post-counselling , and a statistical significant difference was observed among the two groups .

4- As regarding exclusive breast feeding , this study showed that 50% of infants received exclusive breast feeding in the study group, versus (14%) of the control group . However a significant difference was ob-

served between the two groups .

5- As regarding the practice of exclusive breast feeding between the working mothers , the study revealed that the higher percent of breast feeder was between non-working mothers (64.29%) in the study group .

6- Regarding the knowledge of breast feeding technique and breast care , the study revealed a statistically significant differences between the study and control groups after counselling .

7- The majority of mothers (74%) of both groups did not know the benefits of colostrum pre-counselling versus (72 %) in the study group have improved knowledge post-counselling .

8- As regarding the knowledge of practicing milk expression , there is no statistical difference between both groups before counselling , while the difference was significant after counselling and the study group have improved knowledge (76%) versus (20) in the control group .

9- The study revealed that the knowledge about the concept of proper weaning was statistically non significant before and after counselling , and this need more concentration and teaching programs for weaning .

10- The results of this study have generally put into evidence the beneficial effect of a teaching and counselling program for mothers about breast feeding , and the positive impact of the study group to continue breast feeding .

It is necessary to follow up mothers and support them to reinforce and establish breast feeding .