

Comparison of knowledge, attitudes and practices on exclusive breastfeeding between primiparous and multiparous mothers attending Wajir District hospital, Wajir County, Kenya: a cross-sectional analytical study

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Abstract

Background: Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) is recommended for 6 months of age, with continued breastfeeding for 2 years of age or beyond. There is paucity of information on the disparity in Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) on EBF between primiparous and multiparous mothers. This study compared the KAP on EBF between primiparous and multiparous mothers attending Wajir County Hospital, Wajir County, Kenya and investigated the association between maternal knowledge and attitudes and EBF.

Methods: Information on maternal KAP on EBF was collected through structured researcher administered questionnaires for a total of 281 mothers, recruited from a maternal and child health centre in 2014; primiparous (n = 137) and multiparous (n = 144) with infants 0–5 months of age. Maternal knowledge and attitudes on various aspects of breastfeeding were determined. The knowledge and attitude scores were also calculated. The practice of EBF was determined based on a 24-h recall.

Results: The prevalence of EBF among infants 0–5 months old was 45.5%. The rate of EBF among primiparous mothers was 39.4% and multiparous mothers 49.3%. The knowledge score on breastfeeding (out of a total of 10) for the primiparous mothers was 7.93 ± 2.10 and 7.49 ± 2.20 for the multiparous mothers. The mean attitude score (out of a total score of 40) for the primiparous mothers was 29.46 ± 5.65 and 28.65 ± 6.40 for the multiparous mothers. The prevalence of EBF and maternal knowledge and attitudes towards breastfeeding was similar among the two groups of mothers. Those mothers with positive attitudes towards breastfeeding were more likely to EBF (Fisher's exact test; $p = 0.00$) compared with those with lower scores.

Conclusions: Interventions to promote exclusive breastfeeding should be tailored to the needs of each population by identifying the factors that influence the practice in a given context. The findings of this study will be useful particularly for behavior change communication interventions by those organizations working in similar circumstances to the study area.

Keywords: Attitude and practices (KAP); Exclusive breastfeeding; Kenya; Knowledge; Multiparous mothers; Primiparous mothers

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