

# Breastfeeding Techniques among Primiparous Women

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Breast milk is the best milk for the babies. It enhances the bonding between the mother and child. The study was undertaken to assess the breast feeding technique among the primi mothers.

**Methodology:** A descriptive study was conducted at tertiary care hospital of North Karnataka. Seventy five primiparous women after 24 hours of delivery were the samples. Bristol breast feeding assessment tool was used to collect the data.

**Results:** Results of the present study revealed that 53% of women were following incorrect position, 61% were not following good attachment. Whereas 67% of babies were sucking correctly and 60% of babies were swallowing correctly. The total score was 59 % of mothers follow incorrect technique of breast feeding and only 41 % of mothers follow correct technique of breast feeding.

**Summary:** There is a need of support to the primi women in breast feeding.

**Keywords:** Breast feeding, Breast feeding technique, Attachment to breast, Breast milk

## INTRODUCTION

Breast feeding is a unique bonding experience for mother and her newborn. It stimulates all the senses and close body contact allows the newborn to recognize its mothers smell. The newborn can feel and hear the sound of her heart beats which is similar to the intrauterine environment<sup>1</sup>.

Breast milk is specific and complete food for newborn. It is easily digested and well absorbed by the newborn. Protection against infection and facilitate mother infant bonding and promotes better brain growth. For the mother breast feeding helps in involution of uterus, delays pregnancy and lower risk of breast and

ovarian cancer. The newborn should be put to the breast within half an hour of birth. There is no restriction of the number of feeds and duration of sucking time<sup>2</sup>.

For hundreds of thousands of years humans like all other mammals fed their young milk. Before the twentieth century alternatives to breast feeding were rare. In 18<sup>th</sup> century flour or cereal mixed with broth were introduced as substitute for breast feeding. But this did not have a favorable outcome. Breast feeding is the feeding of an infant or young child with breast milk directly from female human breast i.e. (via lactation) rather than from a baby bottle or other containers<sup>3</sup>.

Attention to technique in the early stage may prevent many later problems. The principles are i) the mother should be comfortable ii) the newborn is brought to the breast rather than vice versa iii) help with repositioning in the second breast. The mother adopts a position of comfort wither sitting up in bed with her back supported lying on her side or sitting on a chair. The baby is held securely, close to the mother's body and facing her. The baby's back, neck and head should be straight and well

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supported. The baby's mouth should be open. It may be necessary to stroke the corner of the mouth with the nipple to elicit rooting reflex in which the baby opens the mouth. The baby is brought to the breast and attaches adequately by taking a good amount of the breast including the nipple and much of the areola in to the mouth. Failure to do this will mean that the nipple will be sucked up on directly causing nipple pain and trauma. When attached correctly the gums will then lie over the lactiferous sinuses, lower lip is turned outward and the baby's chin touches the breast. Milk is then obtained from the breast mainly by the action of the whole mouth of the baby in compressing the lactiferous sinuses and less so by direct suction<sup>4</sup>.

Most of the mothers don't know the correct technique of breast feeding. This leads to many unnoticed and biased problems in babies and lactating mothers. These include improper nutrition to baby, altered growth, Oral thrush, low secretion of milk, inadequate feeds, nipple problems etc. There are few simple ways to practice the art of breast feeding techniques like starting breast feeding immediately after birth, proper positions, latching up and burping up the baby. Minor problems may occur during breast-feeding. But with proper planning, knowledge, and support, mothers can overcome these challenges and continue breast-feeding. Before the baby is born, attending classes, reading books, and watching videos that demonstrate breast-feeding techniques will help the mothers in promoting breast feeding practices.<sup>5</sup>

WHO recommends exclusive breast feeding for infants till they are six month old. About 1.4 million deaths of children of children aged below 2 years in settings worldwide especially in low income countries are due to suboptimal breast feeding practices. One fifth of neonatal death can be prevented by initiating exclusive breast feeding as early as possible<sup>6</sup>.

In India rate of malnutrition or wasting are twice as high as the average in sub-saharan African and 10 times higher than Latin American. Currently an estimated 25 million children are wasted in India. 53 million are underweight and 61 million chronically malnourished. Much of this happens in the prenatal and first two years of a child's life damaging growth, brain development, eventual school performance and adult productivity<sup>7</sup>.

According to NIS (National Immunization Survey) results, 23 states have greater than 75% of women

breastfeeding at hospital discharge. 10 states have greater than 50% of their infants being breastfed at 6 months of age. 12 states have greater than 25% of their infants being breastfed at 1 year of age. 10 states have greater than 40% of their infants being exclusively breastfed through 3 months of age. 8 states have greater than 17% of their infants being exclusively breastfed through 6 months of age. The 8 states of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, and Washington have achieved the three Healthy People 2010 objectives above. More than 60% of mothers of all racial/ethnic groups and of all education levels are initiating breastfeeding. Only teenagers with 51% initiating breastfeeding are less than the 60% initiation rate.<sup>8</sup>

A study conducted aimed at investigating the effectiveness of the computer assisted instruction about breast feeding technique during early stages of labour on knowledge and breast feeding technique among early primigravida mothers. The sample size comprises of 50 primiparous mothers who delivered and received care at Siriraj Hospital. The findings showed that the mean post test knowledge of breast feeding scores in the experimental group after computer assisted instruction was higher than the pre test scores before computer assisted instruction at a statistically significant less ( $P < 0.001$ ). The result suggest that the nurses in the labour room who are involved in breast feeding promotion should apply this computer assisted instruction to continuously promote successful breast feeding in adolescent mothers during early labour and through the post partum period.<sup>9</sup> Breastfeeding technique is a learned skill for both mother and newborn. Breast feeding techniques comprises of commencement of breast feeding, breastfeeding positions, latching on, taking your baby off the breast and burping .<sup>10</sup> From the observation in the post natal ward, the researcher found that the mothers especially primipara mothers were not aware of the facts regarding breast feeding techniques of their babies. They were often complaining of problems like baby is not sucking well, less milk, flat nipple, pain at the surgical site or at the episiotomy wound site, pain in the breast, breast engorgement etc. thus this study was undertaken to assess the technique of breast feeding and find the association between breast feeding techniques and selected demographic variables.

**MATERIALS AND METHOD**

Present study was done by descriptive design at postnatal wards of the tertiary care hospital of north Karnataka. Seventy five primiparous women after 24 hours of delivery were the samples. Bristol breast feeding assessment tool and researcher prepared questionnaire for socio demographic information was used. The data was collected after obtaining the consent from the subjects.

**RESULTS**

The present study results revealed that 63% of women in the age group of 23 to 26 , 28% were 18 to 22 years and 9% were 27 years and above. Regarding education status 37% were completed PUC, 28% were of secondary education, 20% were graduates, 10%were had primary education, 4% were completed professional courses and 3% were illiterate.

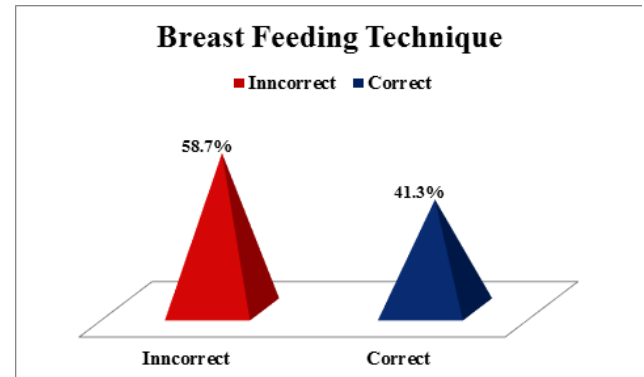
With regard to mode of delivery 55%had full term normal delivery and 45% underwent LSCS. 44%delivered in between 36 to 38 weeks of gestation and 56% delivered at 39 to 41 weeks of gestation. 57% of babies born were male and 43% were females. With regard to weight of the newborn 47% were in between 2.51 to 3.0 kgs, 28%were 3.01 to 3.5 kgs, 23% were2.00 to 2.5 kgs and 3% were 3.51 and above.

Regarding to maternal medical illness 76% were normal, 7% had GDM, 7% were having HDP and 11 % had other maternal medical illness. 53% did not had formal information and 47% had formal education about breast feeding techniques.

**Table 1: Distribution of mothers according breast feeding technique followed N=75**

	Incorrect		Correct	
	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)
POSITION	40	53	35	47
ATTACHMENT	46	61	29	39
SUCKING	25	33	50	67
SWALLOWING	30	40	45	60
<b>Overall</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>41</b>

The table 1 shows that 53% of women were following incorrect position, 61% were not following good attachment. Whereas 67% of babies were sucking correctly and 60% of babies were swallowing correctly. The total score was 59 % of mothers follow incorrect technique of breast feeding and only 41 % of mothers follow correct technique of breast feeding.



**Figure 1: Percentage distribution of Breast Feeding Technique**

There was no association found with any of the demographic variable and breast feeding technique.

**DISCUSSION**

Proper positioning and attachment of the baby during breastfeeding prevents sore nipples, engorgement and mastitis and also facilitates the milk production and release.<sup>11</sup> The IMNCI strategy recommends systemic assessment of breast feeding. It emphasizes on proper position and attachment of the infant to the breast.<sup>12</sup> The present study shows that 63% of women are in the age group of 23 to 26 years. A similar study conducted at Kocchi, Kerala reveals that majority women were from the age group of 21 to 25 years is significant with present study.<sup>13</sup>Regard to education 37% were completed PUC, mode of delivery 55% had full term normal delivery, 56% delivered at 39 to 41 weeks of gestation. A study by Padmashri et al,<sup>13</sup> E Premila et. al <sup>14</sup> does have significance with education, mode of delivery and gestation age at delivery. In present study 53% of women were following incorrect position, 61% were not following good attachment. Whereas 67% of babies were sucking correctly and 60% of babies were swallowing correctly. The total score was 59 % of mothers follow incorrect technique of breast feeding and only 41 % of mothers follow correct technique of breast feeding. This was similar to the study done by Dongre et al <sup>15</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The present study result shows that there is a need of support system which helps the mother to feed following correct technique.

**Conflict of Interest:** Nil

**Source of Funding:** None

**Ethical Clearance** – Obtained from institutional ethical committee

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