

Exclusive breastfeeding rate and associated factors among mothers attending Child Welfare Clinics in Jaffna Municipal Council MOH area

Yathushan V¹, Dinoshiga K¹, Suhirthan N¹, Seerdini K¹, Udenaka DMT¹, Rajeev G², Kumarendran B³

¹*Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

²*MOH, Nallur*

³*Department of Community and Family Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

Introduction and Objectives: Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) during first 6 months of life reduces infant morbidity and mortality. The EBF rate for 6 months was 64.4% in a study done in Jaffna district (2010–2012). This study aimed to determine the EBF rate and factors associated with EBF among mothers attending Child Welfare Clinics in the Jaffna Municipal Council MOH area.

Methods: This clinic based descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out from October to December 2020 among 272 mothers who had infants between age of completion of 4 and 9 months at 10 clinic centers located in Jaffna Municipal Council MOH area. Data was collected using an interviewer-administered questionnaire developed using the KoBoCollect app and analyzed using SPSS 26. Ethics approval was obtained from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna.

Results: The rate of EBF for 4 and 6 months was 92.6% (252/272) and 89.5% (170/190) respectively. 86 out of 272 infants were less than 6 months old infants, in which 4 were not exclusively breastfed. The main reason for the cessation of EBF was self-decision and formula feeds were started. There was no significant association between maternal factors (age, education and employment status) infant factors (sex, parity and birth weight) and socioeconomic factors (monthly income and support) The mean antenatal visits of those who practised EBF and those who did not were 10.5 and 8.5, respectively, indicating a significant association ($p < 0.001$). Likewise mean postnatal visits of those who practised EBF and those who did not were 3.75 and 3.54, respectively, indicating a significant association ($p < 0.001$)

Conclusion: The rate of EBF is relatively high in those who are attending CWC of Jaffna Municipal Council. Aside from antenatal and postnatal health facility visits, no other factor was identified to be associated with EBF. We recommend doing the study at home in the absence of medical staff to increase its authenticity. Mothers should be enlightened about the nutritional benefits of breast milk over formula, and community-based antenatal programmes should be promoted to attain this.

Keywords: Exclusive breastfeeding, Child Welfare, Mothers