

Study on knowledge and attitude towards newborn baby care among antenatal mothers in Jaffna Municipal area

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Background: Neonatal baby care contributes towards controlling neonatal disease and death. It is essential for expectant mothers to have good knowledge and positive attitudes towards newborn care. Such knowledge and attitudes can critically enhance neonatal health. This study aimed to assess knowledge and attitudes towards new born baby care among antenatal mothers in the Jaffna Municipal Area in northern Sri Lanka.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out in antenatal clinics of Jaffna Municipal Area among 210 pregnant mothers. Data were collected using an interviewer-administered questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS v.23 computer software. The knowledge score was calculated. The median knowledge score (31) was considered the cutoff. Those who obtained 31 or above were categorized to have adequate knowledge and those who got below 31 were categorized to have inadequate knowledge.

Results: 43.3% of the sample had adequate knowledge and 58.6% had adequate attitude. Adequate knowledge on maintaining hygiene of baby, assessing baby's health condition, maintaining a safe environment for baby, infection control of baby and breast feeding were 66.2%, 59%, 81.4%, 20.5% and 79%, respectively. Three-fourths of mothers who had studied up to Grade 5 and 65.2% of mothers who had studied from Grade 6 to GCE O/L had inadequate knowledge. The relationship between age and knowledge was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$); mothers aged 38 to 42 years showed 100% inadequate knowledge. The relationship between parity and knowledge was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$); 67% of primi mothers had inadequate knowledge.

Conclusion: Knowledge on infection control of baby among antenatal mothers is inadequate. We need to improve mothers' attendance to antenatal classes, and give proper instruction to midwives in order to address the areas in which mothers have inadequate knowledge and attitudes.

Keywords: Newborn care, antenatal care, knowledge, attitudes, Jaffna