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Attitudes and barriers to Breastfeeding among Mothers in Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Background: Breastfeeding provides unsurpassed natural nutrition to newborns and infants. It has an excellent mix of food elements and vitamins that infants need to grow. Nonetheless, the tendency for breastfeeding remains below the expected levels.

Objectives: To explore the attitudes and barriers to breastfeeding among mothers in Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Methods. A cross-sectional study was conducted, from January to April 2019; 399 PNU students, employees, and faculty mothers aged 18 years and above with experience of childbirth and breastfeeding were included in and using a predesigned validated questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of four scales: sociodemographic, attitude toward breastfeeding, barriers to breastfeeding, and induced lactation knowledge.

Results: The participants' mean age was 34.1 ± 10.4 years; most (87.8%) were Saudi; 92.8% were married; 62% had a bachelor's degree; and 43% had "enough income." 40% of mothers reported >6 months "exclusive breastfeeding" for the first baby. An overall score of breastfeeding attitude averaged 59.6 ± 7.3 . The tendency for scoring a negative attitude to breastfeeding was significantly reported ($p < 0.5$) among 127 (31.8%) 31- to 40-year-old mothers; 153 (38.3%) bachelor's degree holders; and 157 (39.3%) employees (χ^2 (4) 14.6, p 0.006; χ^2 (4) 10.4, p 0.034; and χ^2 (4) 20.4, $p < 0.001$, respectively). "Mother's illness" was the most commonly (63%) reported barrier to "not to breastfeed," followed by "work" (45.5%) and "father not supporting breastfeeding" (14.8%).

Conclusions: An overall negative attitude toward breastfeeding among PNU mothers was noted. Barriers included mother's sickness and work. Efforts to minimize negative attitudes and barriers among susceptible mothers are warranted.

Recommendations: (a) providing health education programs in student curricula, (b) support the creation of a breastfeeding-friendly work environment, and (c) conducting awareness campaigns about induction of lactation.

Keywords: Intensive Care Unit (ICU); Nursing practice; Teamwork; Midwifery

Recent Publications

1. Tromp, J. Kieffe-de Jong, H. Raat et al., "Breastfeeding and the risk of respiratory tract infections after infancy: the Generation R Study," PLoS One, vol. 12, no. 2, Article ID e0172763, 2017.
2. World health organization (WHO), "Global breastfeeding scorecard, 2017. Tracking progress for breastfeeding policies and programmes," 2017, <https://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/infantfeeding/global-bf-scorecard-2017.pdf>.

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3. H. M. Shaheen, N. N. Hegazy, and S. A. Sakr, "The barriers to breastfeeding among women: a single-center experience," *Menoufia Medical Journal*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 855–861, 2018.
4. J. Chen, T. Xin, J. Gaoshan et al., "The association between work related factors and breastfeeding practices among Chinese working mothers: a mixed-method approach," *International Breastfeeding Journal*, vol. 14, no. 28, 2019.

Biography

Alzahrani has her expertise in management the diseases and common conditions in primary health care setting and education process for student, residents and patients. She has a passion in improving the health and wellbeing. She has breast-feeding training during her residency program and has participated in breast-feeding awareness campaigns. She has built this model after years of experience in evidence based practice, research, teaching and administration positions in different institutions. She obtained her higher degree of education in Family Medicine and Medical Education in Saudi Arabia and Canada.

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