

## Original Research Article

# A cross sectional study on breast feeding practices among mothers in the urban slums of greater Hyderabad, Telangana

Mahesh Kumar Mummadi<sup>1\*</sup>, Govind N. Kusneniwar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Community Medicine, Apollo Institute of Medical sciences and Research (AIMSR), Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad, Telangana, India

<sup>2</sup>Department of Community Medicine, Medici Institute of Medical Sciences, Ghanpur, Hyderabad, Telangana, India

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### \*Correspondence:

Dr. Mahesh Kumar Mummadi,  
E-mail: mahidoc@yahoo.com

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Breastfeeding is the normal way of providing young infants with the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development. After delivery, routine newborn care procedures that separate mother and baby should be delayed for at least the first hour to allow mother and newborn to be in uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact to encourage and promote initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour. National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4 shows children under 3 years breastfed within one hour of birth was 40.1%. Most of the studies on breast feeding practices including NFHS -4 are limited to either urban or rural but not in urban slums. Hence, present study was conducted especially in urban slums of Greater Hyderabad, Telangana.

**Methods:** A cross sectional study was conducted during May to October 2013 in the urban slums of Hyderabad Outskirts. Out of four slums two were randomly selected for the study. The questionnaire was adapted from Action against hunger (ACF-USA) and modified to suit the study. Information was collected by house to house visit and questionnaire was administered to the mothers who had children less than 3 years of age. Data was entered in MS Excel and analysed using Epi info 7.

**Results:** A total of 112 mothers participated in the study. Of them 97.3% breast fed their children and 2.7% did not. Breast feeding was initiated within an hour among 50.89%. Pre-lacteal feeds given in 23.21%. Of them 34.6% gave buffalo milk, 30.8% gave honey, 19.2% gave sugar water and 15.4% gave infant formula. 83.03% received breast milk within 24 hrs. 54% practiced Exclusive breastfeeding. 33.1% reported having used bottle feeding, 10.7% reported having used a pacifier, of them 19.2% had low milk secretion, 3.85% were busy, 61.54% used it to stop the baby crying.

**Conclusions:** Breast feeding practices were adequate with initiation within one hour was fine which needs to be increased by promoting importance of breast feeding. Practice of pre-lacteal feeds was high. There is a marked difference between exclusively breastfed percentage in different parts of India.

**Keywords:** Breastfeeding, Children, Exclusive breastfeeding, Feeding practices, Urban slums

## INTRODUCTION

Breastfeeding is the normal way of providing young infants with the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development. After delivery, routine newborn care procedures that separate mother and baby should be

delayed for at least the first hour to allow mother and newborn to be in uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact to encourage and promote initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour.<sup>1</sup> National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4 shows children under 3 years breastfed within one hour of birth was 40.1%.<sup>2</sup> Breastfeeding has well-established short-term benefits, particularly the reduction of

morbidity and mortality due to infectious diseases in childhood. A pooled analysis of studies carried out in middle/low income countries showed that breastfeeding substantially lowers the risk of death from infectious diseases in the first two years of life.<sup>3</sup> The importance of breastfeeding for infant nutrition and the prevention of infant morbidity and mortality as well as the prevention of long-term chronic diseases are well established, and thus breastfeeding is an essential component of infant and child survival and health programs.<sup>4</sup> Most of the studies on breast feeding practices including NFHS -4 are limited to either urban or rural but not in urban slums. Hence, present study was conducted especially in urban slums of Greater Hyderabad, Telangana.

**METHODS**

**Study Design:** Cross sectional study. **Study duration:** May to October 2013 which included Field visit, Preliminary survey, Data collection, Analysis and Report writing.

**Study population and setting:** In Outskirts of Greater Hyderabad, out of four slums two were randomly chosen.

**Inclusion criteria**

All the mothers with children less than 3 years who are willing to participate in the study and are able to communicate in Telugu, English or Hindi languages.

**Exclusion criteria**

Mothers who are not eligible for inclusion criteria were excluded

**Equipment used**

Pre-designed breast-feeding questionnaire adapted from Action against hunger has been used.<sup>5</sup>

**Data collection**

Participants from two urban slums were questioned in conscious coherent state. Pre-designed questionnaire adapted from “Action against hunger breast feeding KAP survey” was used.

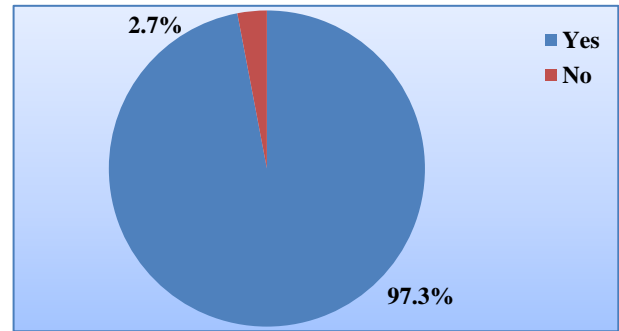
**Data entry and statistical analysis**

Data Entry has been done in MS Excel. Analysis was done using SPSS (version 17). Frequencies of all morbidities were analysed. Data was presented in percentages.

**RESULTS**

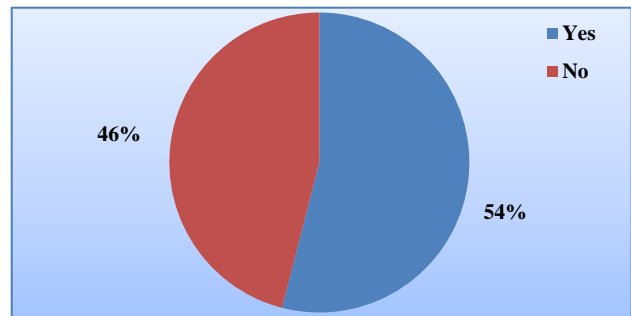
A total of 112 mothers participated in the study. Of them 97.3% breast fed their children and 2.7% did not. Breast feeding was initiated within an hour among 50.89 %. Pre-lacteal feeds given in 23.21%. Of them 34.6% gave

buffalo milk, 30.8% gave honey, 19.2% gave sugar water and 15.4% gave infant formula. 83.03% received breast milk within 24 hrs. 54% practiced exclusive breastfeeding. 33.1% reported having used bottle feeding, 10.7% reported having used a pacifier, of them 19.2% had low milk secretion, 3.85% were busy, 61.54% used it to stop the baby crying.



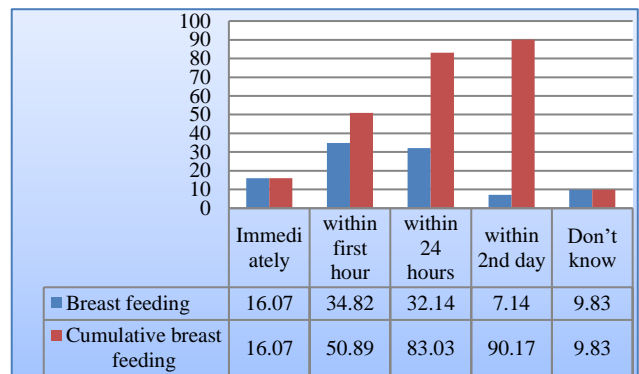
**Figure 1: Percentage of overall breast feeding in participants.**

97.3% of participants have breastfed their babies and 2.7% haven't breastfeed at all.



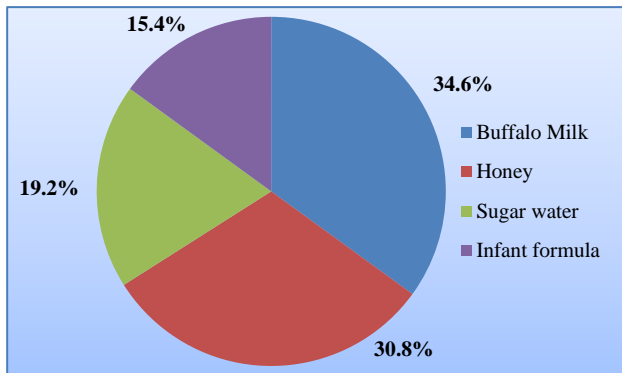
**Figure 2: Percentage of exclusive breast feeding in participants.**

54% of participants exclusively breastfed their babies upto 6 months. Whereas 46% haven't breastfeed exclusively.



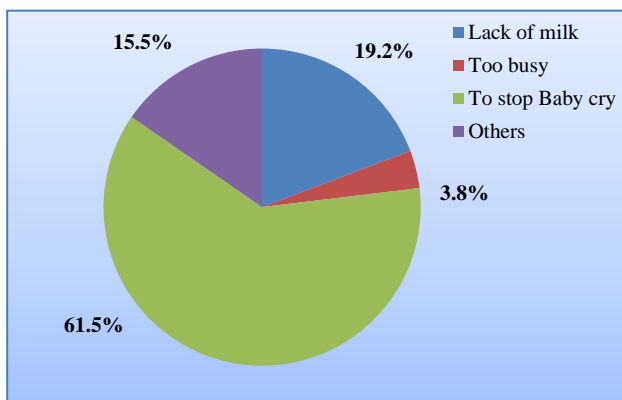
**Figure 3: Percentage of breast feeding as per time of baby birth among participants.**

Above figure depicts that about 50.89% of mothers have started Breast feeding within first hour of delivery and almost 83.03% within first 24 hours.



**Figure 4: Percentage of pre-lacteal feed practices among participants.**

Pre-lacteal feeds given in 23.21%. Of them 34.6% gave buffalo milk, 30.8% gave honey, 19.2% gave sugar water and 15.4% gave infant formula.



**Figure 5: Reasons for pacifier use among participants.**

Among all participants 10.7% reported having used a pacifier, of them 19.2% had low milk secretion, 3.85% were busy, 61.54% used it to stop the baby crying.

## DISCUSSION

Breastfeeding is the normal way of providing young infants with the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development. The importance of breastfeeding for infant nutrition and the prevention of infant morbidity and mortality as well as the prevention of long term chronic diseases are well established, and thus breastfeeding is an essential component of infant and child survival and health programs.

In the Present study, a total of 112 mothers participated. Of them 97.3% breast fed their children and 2.7% did not. Similar results were seen in Study “Breast feeding Practices and Newborn Care in Rural Areas: A

Descriptive Cross-Sectional Study” conducted by Madhu K et al in 2009.<sup>6</sup>

In Present study, 50.89% initiated Breast feeding within an hour of delivery. Whereas in NFHS-4 it was 40.1%. However, “A study on infant and young feeding practices among mothers attending an urban health center in East Delhi” conducted by Khan AM et al in 2012 shown that about 37.2% have initiated Breastfeeding within one hour.<sup>7</sup>

In Present study, 83.03% have been breastfed within first 24 hours of delivery, similar results 81% observed in study by Madhu K et al and 76.67% in study “Feeding Practices in an Urban slum of Kolkata” conducted by Roy S et al in 2009.<sup>8</sup>

In Present study 54% of children are exclusively breastfed upto 6 months. whereas NFHS-4 shown around 70.2% and Study by Roy S et al shown as 28.3 et al. It implies that there is a marked difference between exclusively breastfed percentage in different parts of india.

In present study bottle feeding is observed in 33.1% similarly 26.5% seen in study conducted by Khan AM et al. In Present study about 23.21% have given pre-lacteal feeds. 29.16% in study by Roy S et al, 38% in study by Khan AM et al and only 19% in study conducted by Madhu K et al.

## CONCLUSION

Breast feeding practices were adequate with initiation within one hour was fine which needs to be increased by promoting importance of breast feeding. Practice of pre-lacteal feeds was high. There is a marked difference between exclusively breastfed percentage in different parts of India.

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*Conflict of interest: None declared*

*Ethical approval: The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee*

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