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Research Article

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, AND PRACTICE OF SAUDI WOMEN IN RIYADH CITY TOWARDS BREASTFEEDING

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Abstract:

Background: Absence or limited knowledge about importance of breastfeeding may lead to unwanted consequences.

Objective: This study aimed to evaluate the attitude and knowledge of Saudi mothers towards breastfeeding.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted in Aleman hospital, Riyadh city, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), started from first November 2016 to 29 December 2016. The questionnaire was collected from 774 Saudi mothers who attended this hospital, for visiting clinics and departments. Our study was excluding all non-Saudi women. The questionnaire was created in Arabic and completed by women. Data were analyzed by using Excel program, p-value <0.05 was used as description for significant difference.

Result: Out of 744 mothers with average age (33.87 ± 8.13). Most mothers at high educational level (74.58%, P<0.001). (43.72%) have four or more children. High percentage mothers have knowledge that breastfeeding prevent a child from infectious and allergic (53.75%, p<0.001), and it strengthen social bond between mother and her baby (94%). Mothers who exclusively breastfeed their babies for one to six months (47%). Most important reason for stopping breastfeeding was insufficient milk (30%, p<0.001), most common herbal used was Fenugreek (36.56%).

Conclusion: As opposed to what the World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended we found that breastfeeding in the first six months was not optimal. In spite of high level of educational mothers, we need to increase their awareness about the importance of breastfeeding. The most common reason is inadequate milk. Health care workers should be educating mothers about the importance of breast feeding.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Breastfeeding is natural food and the best way can be providing a nutrient need by mother to her baby for healthy growth and development. To reduce mortality and morbidity it is the important public health strategy, and to reduce maternal morbidity and the cost of health care. Most of the mothers can be provided a breastfeeding for them infants, as long as they have precise information, family support, health care system, and social at all. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that mothers breastfeed their babies exclusively during the six-month period to the first year of a child's life to ensure better health. Mothers who haven't any health problem they should be breastfeed them infants exclusively for 6 months of age and continues breastfeeding with proper foods up to two years of age. Some mothers can't breastfeed the infants if they have viral diseases or infectious diseases, also the mothers who takes some medicine they cannot breastfeed them babies to avoid the excretion of this medicine from the milk. Breastfeeding it is the best strategy can be provided many nutrients needed to infants for perfect health life, also helping the infants protection against child illness and infection. WHO recommended that the milk produced at the end of pregnancy is best perfect food for newborn baby should be initiate feeding at first hour of infant age.¹⁻⁵ Recently there is growing concern in breastfeeding habits, this is also growing concern in Saudi Arabia society. The breast-milk protect infant against infection diseases in postpartum and diseases that may be affect child's in future, also breastfeeding is protective way against risk of obesity. infant who are breastfed received antibodies from mother breast milk.⁶⁻⁸ May some women cannot be provide breast-milk for them infants, or they have in-adequate milk supplies to feed infant in spite of good health. Different reasons that make women stop breastfeeding.⁹ There is study was in Australia at September 2011 that 46% of women were cease decision breastfeeding before 52 week of infant age, however some women stopped breastfeeding before 26 weeks for in-adequate milk to feed them infants, women who cease decision breastfeeding at age between 26-52 week of infants the most common reason for that is the baby lost interest.¹⁰ A report was in Canada published at 2014 (73.6%) of 500 women stop breast-feed before six months of age. With most commonly reason for stopped breastfeeding (22.6%) feel fatigue or inconvenient.¹¹

1.1. Purpose

This cross-sectional survey study aimed to evaluate the attitude and knowledge of Saudi mothers towards breastfeeding, identified the factor that affect breastfeeding, and evaluate use of herbal to

increase milk supply.

2. METHOD:

2.1. Study setting and study population

A cross-sectional survey was conducted among Riyadh District over 2 month's period started from first November 2016 to 29 December 2016. We targeted in this study the mothers at Riyadh city. This questionnaire was conduct from Aleman hospital 200 bed, the hospital was located in Riyadh capital city, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The questionnaire was collected from women who attended this hospital, for visiting clinics and departments. All women were included in the study. Our study was excluding all non-Saudi women as well as non-pregnant women who attended hospital. Our sample size of this study was 774 mothers.

2.2. Data Collection

The questionnaire was included all information we need in our study, demographic data, women characteristics, women educational level, health care, attitude of infant breastfed, knowledge and factor effecting breastfeeding, and breast-feeding state. Our study population was randomly including all women who had previously breastfed child and women they are newly married who have future idea for getting pregnant. This study was conducted from mothers who attended to Aleman Hospital in different department and online questionnaire. Knowledge, attitude, and practice of mothers were assessed in this study from their responses.

2.3. Data analysis

Demographic data and all other categorical variables were coded and analyzed by using Excel program (Version 12; StataCorp, College Station, TX, USA). The chi-square statistic and t-test were used in the study. p-value <0.05 was used as description for significant. Data were analyzed by using Excel program statistical software.

3. RESULTS:

A total of 774 mothers were included in our study and not all of them were complete the questionnaire, most of mothers were completed the survey. Mothers characteristics of participant the average age of our survey was 33.87 years old with stander deviation of ± 8.13 .

3.1. Description of participants

Out of 771 mothers, 575 (74.58%, $P < 0.001$) were in college or in higher education level, followed by mothers they in high school level 144 (18.68%), intermediate level were 36 (4.67%), while the least number in the educational level between the mothers were 16 (2.08%) mothers in elementary level. Mothers they having job or they working were less than the mothers they didn't have job, out

of 770 women, 429 (55.71%) mothers were housewife or unemployed. Moreover, 350 (47.11%) of mothers were have been pregnant for more than four times. Most of mothers in our study having more than four children's 324 (43.72%). In

type of birth out of the 743 mothers, the most common mode of delivery in this questionnaire was normal spontaneous birth 483 (65.01%) followed by Caesarean section mode of delivery (34.99%), (Table1).

Table 1: Characteristic of participant.

Characteristic	N	(%)	p- value
Age			
0-20	28	(3.62)	<0.001
20-30	268	(34.63)	<0.001
31-40	248	(32.04)	<0.001
>41	230	(29.72)	0.0013
total	774	(100)	-
Educational level			
Elementary	16	(2.08)	<0.001
Intermediate	36	(4.67)	<0.001
High school	144	(18.68)	<0.001
College or Higher	575	(74.58)	<0.001
Total	771	(100)	-
Occupation			
Employed	341	(44.29)	0.0454
Unemployed or housewife	429	(55.71)	0.0119
Total	770	(100)	-
Number of pregnancies			
1	133	(17.90)	<0.001
2	122	(16.42)	<0.001
3	138	(18.57)	<0.001
4 or more	350	(47.11)	<0.001
Total	743	(100)	-
Number of children's			
1	154	20.78%	0.0217
2	123	16.60%	<0.001
3	140	18.89%	<0.001
4 and more	324	43.72%	<0.001
Total	741	100%	-
Type of birth			
Normal spontaneous birth	483	65.01%	<0.001
Caesarean section	118	15.88%	<0.001
Both	142	19.11%	<0.001
Total	743	100%	-

3.2. Knowledge

Knowledge of Saudi mothers toward breast-feeding was describing in table 2.

In our cross-sectional questionnaire we had response of the mothers for the benefit of breastfeeding to infant, the mothers can select more than one choice to answer the question, most of the mothers select the breast feeding can prevent the child from allergy and infection by 409 (53.75%), we showed that the second higher answer was the breastfeeding can prevent mothers from breast cancer 318 (41.79%), mothers who answered that the breastfeeding can prevent child from obesity were 26 mothers by (3.42%). We had measured

that the breastfeeding can prevent the child form respiratory illness, a total of 760 mothers, most of them answered that the breastfeeding can prevent baby from respiratory illness, 570 (75%), followed by 172 mothers answered they don't know by (23%). The mothers who know that the baby should be exclusively only breastfeed for at least six months were 517 (68%) from total of 761 mothers, followed by who answered the baby should not be only breastfeed for six months 168 (22%), some of the mothers answered by don't know 76 (10%). Seven hundred fifteen (94%) participants reported that the breastfeeding strengthens the social bond between mother and her baby from total of 760 participant.

Table 2: Knowledge of Saudi women toward breastfeeding

Benefits of breastfeeding	N	%	p- value
Prevention of allergy and infection	409	53.75%	<0.001
Prevention of obesity	26	3.42%	<0.001
prevent mothers from breast cancer	318	41.79%	<0.001
No different between breast and formula feeding	8	1.05%	<0.001
Total	761	100%	-

Breastfeeding prevent the child form Respiratory illness			
Yes	570	75%	<0.001
No	21	3%	<0.001
Don't Know	172	23%	<0.001
Total	763	100%	-

Babies should be exclusively breastfeed (only breast milk) for the first 6 months			
Yes	517	68%	<0.001
No	168	22%	<0.001
Don't know	76	10%	<0.001
Total	761	100%	-

Breastfeeding strengthens the social bond between mother and her baby			
Yes	715	94%	<0.001
No	19	2%	<0.001
Don't know	26	3%	<0.001
Total	760	100%	-

3.3. Attitude

Attitude of Saudi women toward breastfeeding were shown in Table 3.

The mothers who planned to breastfeed them baby in the future we found 428 (57%) from total 757 participants, followed by mothers who planned to mix between breast and formulary feeding 249 (33%), only one percent of participants planned to feed them babies by formulary feeding and ten percent didn't desired yet.

Table 3: Attitude of Saudi women toward breastfeeding

	N	%	p- value
Women how planned to feed them baby's in future			
Breastfeeding	428	57%	<0.001
Formula Feeding	8	1%	<0.001
a Mix of Breast and formula feeding	249	33%	<0.001
Didn't desired	72	10%	<0.001
Total	757	100%	-
Factors influencing breast-feeding.			
My baby was ill and could not breastfeed	31	4%	<0.001
I thought I would not have enough milk	368	50%	<0.001
A health professional said I should not breastfeed for medical reasons	76	10%	0.5283
I believe that formula is as good as breastfeeding or that formula is better	17	2%	<0.001
I thought that breastfeeding would be too inconvenient	93	13%	0.2112
I was sick or had to take medicine	72	10%	0.2832
I wanted to go on a weight loss diet	12	2%	<0.001
I wanted or needed someone else to feed my baby	60	8%	0.01636
The baby's father didn't want me to breastfeed	6	1%	<0.001
Total	735	100%	-
Formulary feeding is good alternative to breastfeeding			
yes	169	22%	<0.001
no	476	62%	<0.001
I don't know	117	15%	<0.001
total	762	100%	-

Factors influenced breastfeeding were measured in our study. Most of mothers they thought they would not have enough milk 368 (50%). There are certain factors converging to each other, some of them they thought that breastfeeding would be too inconvenient, and some of mothers followed the instruction of health professional they should not breastfeed for medical reasons, 93 (13%), 76 (10%).

Formulary feeding is good alternative to breastfeeding were measured in our study. 476 (62%) of mothers response were the formulary feeding isn't good alternative to breastfeeding. 169 (22%) from total 762 answered that the formulary feeding is good alternative to breastfeeding.

3.4. Practice

Practice of Saudi mothers toward breastfeeding.

The reasons for stopping breastfeeding are

measured, most of mothers having similar reason for stopping 202 (30%) the reason was they have Insufficient milk, followed by mothers who stopping breastfeed because they had work, mothers who takes contraceptive pills, and infant refusal breast milk, 109 (16%), 97 (14%), 76 (11%).

The duration for Saudi mother breastfeed them babies were measured in this questionnaire, the mothers who are breastfeed them babies for only six months were 332 (47%), only 116 (16%) mothers from total 708 participants were complete 24 months of breastfeeding, mothers who complete breastfeeding from 12 to 18 months were 112 (15%), mothers who are breastfeed them babies for less than 12 months 80 (11%) and 68 (10%) were breastfeed the babies for less than nine months.

Table 4: Breast-feeding practice toward Saudi mothers

	N	%	p- value
Different reasons for stopping breastfeeding			
Insufficient milk	202	30%	<0.001
Maternal illness	18	3%	<0.001
Pregnant	46	7%	0.009
Work	109	16%	<0.001
Study	18	3%	<0.001
Contraceptive pills	97	14%	<0.001
Getting bored	22	3%	<0.001
Infant adapted to family food	25	4%	<0.001
Infant refusal to breastfeeding	76	11%	0.307
No reason	63	9%	0.576
Total	676	100%	-
Breastfeeding duration among Saudi mother			
1-6	332	47%	<0.001
6-9	68	10%	<0.001
9-12	80	11%	<0.001
12-18	112	16%	0.0129
24	116	16%	0.0315
Total	708	100%	-

Out of 719, mothers who used herbal to improve milk production were 199 (27.67%), ($P = <0.001$). Figure 1.

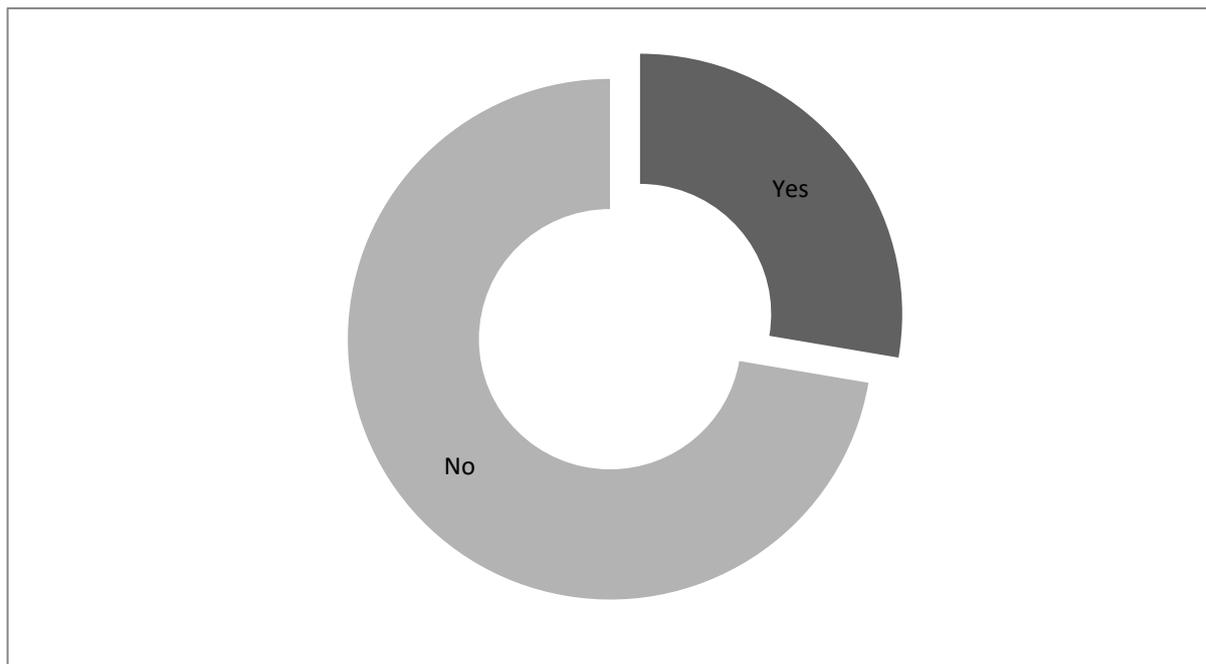


Figure 1: Using herbal vs. non-using herbal to increase milk production.

4. DISCUSSION:

Mothers Knowledge was assessed by Information given by mothers about breast milk constituent. The most important reason given by participants for initiated breastfeeding was mentioned to given the child immunity (53.75%) followed by their knowledge about its prevent the mothers from breast cancer (41.79%), whilst 8 (1.05%) didn't know any advantage about the benefit of breastfeeding. The other finding in Riyadh mothers study where (95.2%) known that the benefit of breastfeeding is to prevent the child from allergy and infection diseases, also breastfeeding can be decreasing incidence of breast cancer (88.4%).¹² It is known that the breastfeeding has many benefits.¹³ mothers who known that the infants should be exclusively breastfeeding for at least 6 months were (n=517 68%) this percentage were finding the Saudi mothers known about benefit of exclusively breastfeeding for at least 6 months better than other county. Only (1.9%) of the 354 Tunisian mothers completed breastfeeding for 6 months.¹³ A report of Bell et al mention that the breastfeeding exclusively up to six months is rarely in Canada.¹⁴ The initiation of breastfeeding rate defined as proportion of infant how received breastfeeding within 48 hours, we found 47% of our participant who exclusively breastfeed them babies for at least 6 months, which is different to Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office of WHO (EMRO) which has reported high rates >60% of early breastfeeding initiation our finding is not similar to other Saudi studies have reported the initiation rate of breastfeeding was up to 92%.¹⁸⁻²³ Yazeed et al, mention that (88.5%) of the mothers

were believe breastfeeding strengths the social bond between mother and her baby.¹⁵ Our finding is similar to this finding, high percentage of mothers have knowledge of this (94%). The literature review of medical research on breastfeeding practice has informed us that more than (80%) of the mothers received education about breastfeeding and its importance.¹⁶ Other study in Jeddah reported that only (56%) of the mothers have breastfeeding education by relative, in absence of the role of health care provider.¹⁷ In this study we found (57%) of mothers who planned to feed them babies a breastfeeding, this indicates that mothers have received breastfeeding education, otherwise (33%) of our participants have concern about breastfeeding in future, which is indicate for absence of breastfeeding education. In western country, the most common reason for stopping breastfeeding it reported to be insufficient milk.²⁴ Shawky et al, have mentioned that the most common reasons that effect on breastfeeding are cesarean delivery and using of oral contraceptive.²⁵ Other Saudi study was reported that the mothers who have work at high risk to discontinued breastfeeding.¹² In this study we found that the insufficient milk (30%), work (16%), and use of oral contraceptive (14%) are the most important reasons to stopping breastfeeding. (47%) of our participant started weaning their children after complete 6 months of breastfeeding, and few of them (16%) are continued breastfeeding for two years. Saudi study has reported that 25% of mothers began weaning at five to six months of age.¹⁵

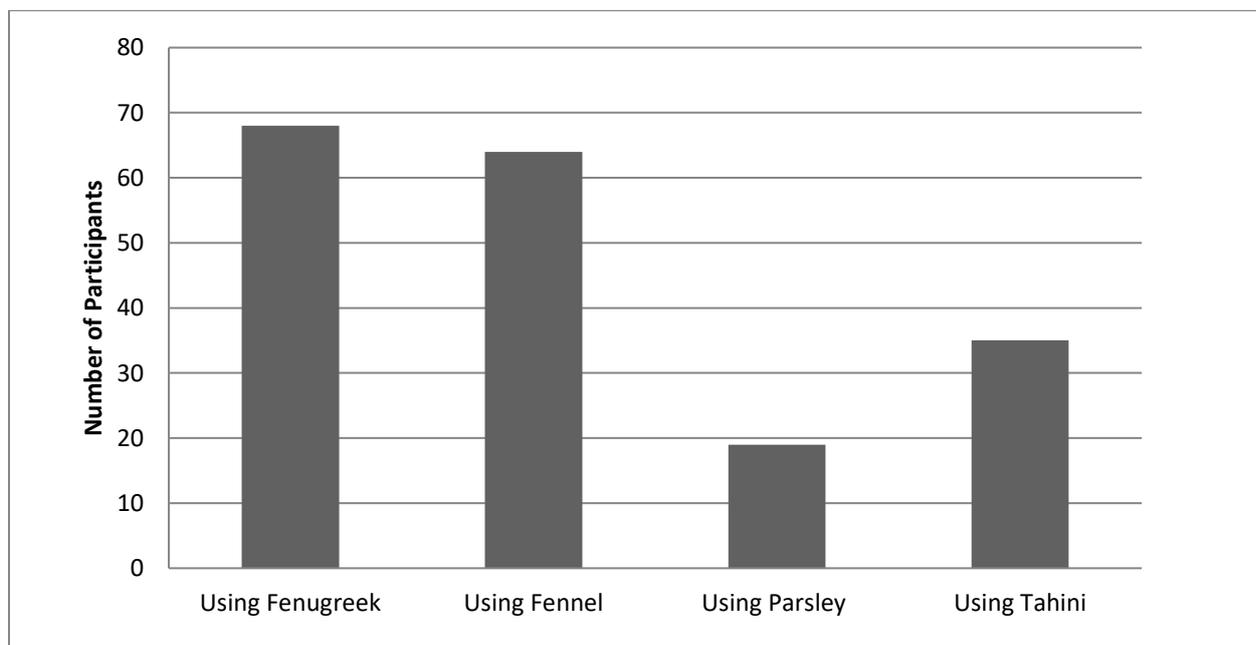


Figure 1: Herbal that used by mothers to increase milk production.

Studies have reported that the use of herbal products (Fennel, Fenugreek, and Sesame) may increase the milk supply in nursing mothers. To improve milk production the Wise Woman Herbal (Weed, 1986) suggest to use fennel seed. Our finding is support that, (68.29%) of mothers had knowledge that fenugreek increased milk production, and high percentage 36.56% from total 199 mothers who used fenugreek to improve milk supply, also high percentage (34.41%) of mothers use fennel to increase milk supply. (Figure 2)

5. CONCLUSION:

As recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) we found that breastfeeding in the first six months was not optimal. In spite of high level of educational mothers, we need to increase their awareness about the importance of breastfeeding. The most common reason is inadequate milk, which needs to increase education of mothers and raise awareness. Health care workers should be encouraged to raise awareness and educate mothers about the importance of breast feeding.

6. Study limitation

It's knowing that the questions in cross sectional questionnaire may misunderstanding by women, missing a clearly answer in some questions. Also some of the participants don't complete the survey.

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