

EXPLORING BREASTFEEDING PATTERNS AND BARRIERS IN A TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL : A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY .

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Abstract

Exclusive breastfeeding stands as a critical facet of maternal and child health, yet challenges persist in achieving the recommended six-month duration. In light of recent research emphasising the determinants and lifelong impact of breastfeeding, our study, conducted at a Kerala tertiary care hospital, seeks to assess the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding, identify barriers faced by postpartum women, and explore cultural influences on maternal feeding practices. Surveying 274 women via Google Forms, we found that while awareness of the recommended duration was high (94.9%), the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding stood at 74.1%. Inadequate breast milk, sore nipples, and family pressure emerged as significant challenges, while the timing of solid food introduction significantly impacted the practice. Our findings align with recent research and highlight the need for culturally sensitive interventions, comprehensive support systems, and healthcare provider engagement to empower mothers in making optimal nutritional choices for their infants.

