KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, AND PRACTICES OF EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING AT DHULIKHEL HOSPITAL, NEPAL

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Disclosures

- None

- COMIRB Number: 15-0362
Malnutrition and Child Mortality in Nepal

One of the highest malnutrition rates in the world.
- *Children < 5*: 41% stunted and 29% underweight\(^1\)

High rates of infant and under 5 mortality
- *Infant Mortality*: 46 per 1000 live births\(^1\)
- *Children < 5 Mortality*: 54 per 1000 live births\(^1\)
Exclusive Breastfeeding and Malnutrition

WHO/UNICEF Breastfeeding recommendations\(^2\):
- Initiation < 1 hour after birth
- EBF (giving only breastmilk without additional food or water) for the first 6 months of life.
- Complementary Feeding >6 months
- Protective against stunting and malnutrition
  - Sufficient nutrition, vitamins, minerals
- 12% reduction in mortality\(^3\)
  - 6-10X less likely than non-breastfed infant to die within first 6 months
- Reduction in Illness\(^4\)
  - Gastrointestinal (~50%)
  - Pulmonary (~33%)
Status of EBF in Nepal

2011 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey\(^1\)

- 98% breastfed
  \[\text{Mean duration: 28.8 months}\]
- 70% exclusively breastfed for first 6 months
  \[\text{Mean duration: 5 months}\]

- Other studies have shown concerning amounts of pre-lacteal and complimentary feedings\(^5\)
- Exclusive breastfeeding at 22 weeks had dropped to 30% in central Nepal\(^6\)
- Misconceptions exist about the use of cow or buffalo milk\(^7\)
Dhulikhel

Population: ~14,000

40 km from Kathmandu

Dhulikhel Hospital:

Focus on high quality academic medicine
Population served: ~1.8 million
Methods

• Quantitative 93-question survey
  – Pregnant Women attending Dhulikhel Hospital Antenatal Clinic
  – Administered Orally by Research Assistants (3)

• Questions pertained to:
  – Demographics
  – BF/EBF Knowledge
  – BF Prior Experience
  – Intended Feeding Choice
  – Attitudes towards EBF
  – Barriers towards EBF
Demographics:

n=300

Age range: 18-38 years old (mean 24)

Gestational age range: 2-42 weeks (mean 25)

Figure 1: Participant Education Level

Figure 2: Participant Occupation

Literacy: 94%
Religion: 85.7% Hindu, 10% Buddhist, 3.0% Christian
Previous Breastfeeding Experience:

111 (37%) of Participants had previously breastfed

54 (49%) of previous mothers reported exclusively breastfeeding their last child for at least 6 months
Breastfeeding Intention:

89 (30%) of Participants reported that they had previously heard of “Exclusive Breastfeeding”.

Figure 4: Feeding Intention

- Breastmilk only for 6 months: 70%
- Don't know/no response: 16%
- Breastmilk plus soft food: 5%
- Breastmilk plus buffalo/cow milk: 4%
- Formula only (0): 2%
- Breastmilk plus soft food and animal milk: 3%
- Only alternatives: 2%
Figure 6: Familiarity with “Exclusive Breastfeeding” Between First Time and Experienced Mothers

P<0.01
**Possible Barriers influencing the decision to exclusively breastfeed:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Barrier</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belief that it is permissible for a baby to occasionally drink water in the first 6 months</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief that babies need other food and liquids when they are sick</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for lack of milk</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for the baby falling ill</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for the baby not feeding well</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for sore nipples</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

■ Rates of EBF in Dhulikhel are below the target and consistent with other smaller studies
■ The lack of EBF knowledge is likely a significant contributor to the low rates of EBF
■ The widespread misconceptions highlight a gap in standardized education regarding EBF practices
■ Implementing a formal EBF intervention tailored to the Dhulikhel community is necessary
Future Directions

- Further analyze current data set
- Create pamphlet for Dhulikhel Hospital’s prenatal clinic that includes:
  - *An explanation of the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding*
  - *Responses to common myths about breastfeeding*
  - *Frequent issues that arise with EBF, along with suggested solutions*
  - *Information on weaning processes and how to continue infant’s diet*

- Have students from the class of 2020 distribute while in Nepal
  - *Pre/post knowledge surveys*
Acknowledgments

- Shrinkhala Shrestha
- Alina Madhikarmi
- Urza Niroula
- Min Lama
- Erin Chojnacki
- Rachel Wojcik
- Haley Smith
- Gaylan Dascanio

- Ngoc Vu
- Paul Kim
- GoFundMe Donors
- Rotary Scholarship
- CHA-PA
Questions?
References:


