

Original Research Article

## Mothers' Knowledge and Practice of Exclusive Breastfeeding in N'Djamena Mother and Child University Hospital

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**Abstract:** *Background:* The World Health Organization (WHO) recommended exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, and continued breastfeeding until the age of 2 years and even beyond depending on the mother's wishes. *Objective:* Assess the knowledge of mothers on the practice of exclusive breastfeeding. *Patients and Method:* This was a prospective and descriptive study for 4 months from July 2019 to October 2019 performed in the pediatrics department of N'Djamena Mother and Child University Hospital about mothers' knowledge and practice of exclusive breastfeeding. Studied variables were: profile of breastfeeding mothers, profile of infants, and type of breastfeeding and mothers' knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding. *Results:* 203 Mothers were interviewed. The age group from 20 to 30 years represented 70%. Mother's characteristics were: married (97%), housewives (64.5%), unschooled (35.5%). Infant's characteristics were: male (55.7%), mean age (27.29 days). Predominant breastfeeding was the main type of breastfeeding with 50.2%. Hypogalactia was the main reason for mixed or artificial breastfeeding with 22.1%. Lack of milk flow was the main reason (23.1%). One hundred and forty-four mothers (70.9%) had not received any information about exclusive breastfeeding. According to 32% of mothers, exclusive breastfeeding was of no benefit. The majority of mothers (91.6%) knew the sign of an effective breastfeeding. *Conclusion:* Breast milk is better and more suitable than any other replacement milk for newborns and infants. The overall results of our survey show that the exclusive breastfeeding is only practiced in a small proportion.

**Keywords:** Exclusive breastfeeding, N'djamena Mother and child hospital.

## INTRODUCTION

Breast milk is the ideal, natural first food for optimal growth and quality emotional development in infants. By its availability, its nutritional and anti-infectious qualities, it represents the best food that can be offered to infants from 0 to 6 months. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, and continued breastfeeding until the age of 2 years and even beyond depending on the mother's wishes [1]. Currently 39% of infants worldwide benefit from this practice during the first six months of life [2]. In Chad, according to data from the 2015, 0.3% of children aged between 0 and 6 months receive only breast milk [3].

**Objective:** Assess the knowledge of mothers on the practice of exclusive breastfeeding.

## PATIENTS AND METHOD

This was a prospective and descriptive study for 4 months from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 to October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019 performed in the pediatrics department of N'Djamena Mother and Child University Hospital about mothers' knowledge and practice of exclusive breastfeeding.

Studied population was consisted of breastfeeding mothers who came for consultation with their children during the study period and who agreed to answer our questions. Each consenting mother was invited to answer the questionnaires after a sufficient and fluid explanation.

Studied variables were: the profile of breastfeeding mothers (age, level of education, occupation, marital status, and parity), the profile of infants: age, sex, reason for consultation, type of breastfeeding and mothers' knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding. Data's were collected using Word 2007 and Excel 2007 software.

## RESULTS

The Pediatrics department received 13,500 outpatients in 2019.

### Mother's Characteristics

Two hundred and 3 mothers responding to our criteria were included in this study. The age group from 20 to 30years was the most represented with 70% (n =142/203). The average age was 24.05 years ± 5.47 with extreme age of 14 and 40 years.

One hundred ninety seven mothers (97% were married. The majority (64.5%, n =132/203) were housewives and 35.5% (n=72/203) were unschooled. Multiparas represented 59% (n=121/203)

### Infant Characteristics

Male infants represented 55.7% (n = 113/203) giving a sex ratio of 1.3.

The infant mean age was 27.29 days + 4.13 with extreme age+ ranging from 1 to 180 days.

The majority of infants 76.4% (n = 154/203) were aged less than one month old.

Moment of feeding

One hundred and sixty-six mothers (81.8%), had given the colostrums to their infants and 48% (n = 97) breastfed their infants immediately after delivery.

**Table-1: The type of breastfeeding**

Type of breastfeeding	n	%
Artificial	9	4.4
Exclusive	5	2.5
mixed	87	42.9
predominant	102	50.2
Total	203	100

Predominant breastfeeding represented 50.2%.

Reasons for mixed breastfeeding

Ninety six mothers (47.3%) practiced mixed or artificial breastfeeding

**Table-2: Breakdown according to the reason for mixed or artificial breastfeeding**

Reason for breastfeeding mixed or artificial	n	%
Hypogalactia	45	22.1
worst milk	1	0.5
Infant illness	22	10.8
Mother illness	8	3.9
Busied mother	8	3.9
Voluntary	2	1

Hypogalactia was the main reason for mixed or artificial breastfeeding with 22.1%.

Reasons delaying the breastfeeding

**Table III: reason delaying the breastfeeding**

Reasons delaying the breastfeeding	n	%
Childhood illness	31	15,3
Maternal illness	28	13,8
Lack of milk flow (hypogalactia)	47	23,1

Lack of milk flow was the main reason (23.1%).

Source of information for mothers on exclusive breastfeeding

**Table-4: Source of mothers' information on breastfeeding**

Source of information	n	%
None	144	70.9
Surroundings people	17	8.4
Media	21	10.3
Health personnal	21	10.3
Total	203	100

One hundred and forty-four mothers (70.9%) had not received any information about exclusive breastfeeding.

Mother's knowledge of the benefits of Exclusive breastfeeding.

**Table-5: Mothers' knowledge on the benefits of Exclusive breastfeeding**

Mothers' knowledge on the benefits	n	%
None	65	32.0
Growth	10	4.9
Economic reason	7	3.4
Complete food	19	9.4
health	31	15.3
Health and growth	4	2
strong	53	26.1
Strong and growth	5	2.5
Strong and heath	9	4.4
Total	203	100

According to 32% of mothers, exclusive breastfeeding has not benefit. However, Fifty-three (26.1%) recognized strong as an advantage.

The majority of mothers (n = 91.6%) had known the sign of an effective breastfeeding. One hundred and thirty mothers (64%) said the weaning age was between 4 months to 6 months, and 81.8% (n = 166) reported that the ab lactation' age was between 12 to 24 months.

## DISCUSSION

The maternal average age was 24 year. The age group from 20 to 30 years was the most represented with 70%. Unschool ed mothers represented 35.5%. These results confirmed ours national data of 2015 which noted that 65.4% of women were not schooled. Ours result could be linked to cultural factors such as early marriage among young people and the practice like prioritization of boy' schooling that the girl.

Predominant breastfeeding had represented 50.2%, however exclusive breastfeeding was noted in 2.5%. According to previous data's [4-6], 36% of children under 6 months worldwide receive only breast milk. The immediate breastfeeding rate in this series was 48%. Our data is lower than those of Shisana *et al.*, [7] in South Africa in 2013 which shows that 93% of newborns are breastfed within an hour preceding childbirth and that 24% receive only exclusive breastfeeding.

According to Blyth *et al.*, [8], hypogalactia is the main the reasons for resorting to artificial breastfeeding. Ours study confirms this finding with 22.1% of mothers citing hypogalactia as the reason for resorting to artificial breastfeeding. It emerges from this series that hypogalactia is also one of the causes of delayed breastfeeding with 23.1%.

Bellati *et al.*, [9] and Gimeno *et al.*, [10] had shown that milk production is regulated by suction. The majority of mothers (70.9%) said that they had not received any information about breastfeeding. Ana *et al.*, [11] in Spain reported that 33.7% of mothers were informed through the internet followed by health personnel in 22.1%. Breastfeeding gives children resistance to infections such as digestive and respiratory infections. It is also associated with a low incidence of chronic conditions such as obesity, asthma, leukemia and diabetes [12]. These virtues assigned to breastfeeding are less known in ours study by the interviewed mothers. In this series, 32% of mothers said that breastmilk

had no benefit. These results highlight the lack of information and the ignorance of the advantages and techniques of breastfeeding in our country and are negative factors for its good practice.

Regarding the age of weaning and ab lactation, 64% of the women interviewed declared that the age of weaning is between 4 months to 6 months and 81.8% think that the age of ab lactation was situated between 12 to 24 months. In Morocco, Bellati *et al.*, [9], showed that diversification began between 3 months to 4 months and the mean age of ab lactation was 10 months. For Bouanene *et al.*, [12] in Tunisia the age of the diversification is between 3 to 6 months (which represented 61.4% of cases).

## CONCLUSION

Breast milk is better and more suitable than any other replacement milk for newborns and infants. The overall results of our survey show that the exclusive breastfeeding is only practiced in a small proportion. Predominantly breastfeeding is the most common. The majorities of women has not received any information about breastfeeding and are unaware of its techniques and benefits.

In view of these results, breastfeeding remains an important issue that requires a lot of attention to ensure that it is practiced correctly as recommended by the WHO.

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