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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE KNOWLEDGE ON POSTNATAL DIET AMONG POSTNATAL MOTHERS: A DESCRIPTIVE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Background of the study

Lactation makes considerable nutritional demands on the mother. Nutritional food during lactation period builds a healthy baby and protects the women's own nutritional health. Inadequate diet for breast feeding mother can hurt the ability to take care of both mother and baby. These deficiencies should be avoided by improving the diet or providing supplements to the mother. Nutritional education should be made available to the postnatal mothers to improve their knowledge.

Objectives

- To determine the knowledge of postnatal mothers on postnatal diet.
- To find an association between the knowledge scores of postnatal mothers on postnatal diet with selected demographic variables.
- To develop and distribute an information booklet on postnatal diet

Method

A descriptive survey approach for was used for this study. The sample consisted of 60 postnatal mothers admitted in postnatal ward of YMCH, Mangalore. Sample was selected by purposive sampling technique. Structured interview schedule was used to collect the data from samples. The collected data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Result

It was found that seventeen percentage of postnatal mothers had good knowledge, forty nine percentage of mothers had average knowledge, and thirty four percentage of women had poor knowledge. Overall mean and standard deviation was 5.733 & 1.071. There was no significant association between age, religion, educational status, occupation, type of family, monthly income, eating habits and previous knowledge

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INTRODUCTION

The postpartum period, or puerperium, begins as soon as the placenta is expelled and lasts for approximately 6 weeks when the uterus becomes regressed almost to the non-pregnant state. By six weeks after delivery, most of the changes of pregnancy, labour, and delivery have resolved and the body has reverted to the non-pregnant state. A good postpartum care and well balanced diet during puerperal period can influence her health for rest of her life.¹

Nutrition is a key factor in national development. The term "Maternal Nutrition" focuses on women as mothers, on their nutritional status as it relates to the bearing and nurturing of children.

Lactation is a normal physiological process that begins soon after parturition during which the mother starts nourishing her baby. The success of lactation as well as the health status of infant depends entirely on the type of diet consumed by the women during lactation. Maternal diet is of significant importance during lactation since quantity and quality of breast milk depends upon maternal diet.²

The expectant and lactating mothers are considered as nutritionally vulnerable group especially in the developing countries of the world. Due to nursing process, mothers are subjected to nutritional stresses. Frequent pregnancies followed by lactation increase the health risk of mothers resulting in a high maternal mortality.

Giving birth to a new life can be very emotional and at the same time very exhausting. But this is also a phase of life wherein diet and exercise plays a very important role not only to get you back in shape but also to bring up a healthy baby. Eating a healthy diet should be your main focus rather than losing weight immediately. Remember it took about nine months for your body to undergo these enormous changes, so give it almost that much time to get back into shape. Although most mothers want to lose their pregnancy weight, extreme dieting and rapid weight loss can be hazardous to your health and to your baby's if you are breastfeeding. It can take several months for a mother to lose the weight she gained during pregnancy. This can be accomplished by cutting out high-fat snacks and concentrating on a diet with plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits, balanced with proteins and

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carbohydrates. Exercise also helps burn calories and tone muscles and limbs³.

Table 1 Description of Demographic Characteristics Of Samples

Sl no	Demographic variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age		
	a) Less than 21 years	10	16.666%
	b) 21-25 years	24	40%
	c) 26-30 years	14	23.333%
2	d) More than 30 years	12	20%
	Religion		
	a) Hindu	8	13.33%
	b) Muslim	33	55%
3	c) Christian	13	21.66%
	d) Any other	6	10%
	Educational Status		
	a) Primary	7	11.666%
4	b) High school	14	23.333%
	c) Higher secondary	11	18.333%
	d) Graduate	12	20%
	e) Post Graduate	9	15%
5	f) Others	7	11.666%
	Occupation		
	a) Professional	11	18.333%
	b) Coolie workers	16	26.666%
6	c) Unemployed/housewife	11	18.333%
	d) Skilled workers	7	11.666%
	e) Others	15	25%
	Type of family		
7	a) Nuclear family	14	23.333%
	b) Joint family	22	36.666%
	c) Extended	24	40%
	Monthly Income		
8	a) Less than Rs.4000	12	20%
	b) Rs. 4001-Rs.5000	21	35%
	c) Rs. 5001- Rs.10, 000	16	26.666%
	Eating habits		
9	a) Vegetarian	10	6.666%
	b) Non vegetarian	50	83.333%
	Any previous information regarding diet during postnatal diet?		
	a) Yes	7	11.666%
10	b) No	53	88.333%

Along with balanced meals, breastfeeding mothers should increase fluids. Many mothers find they become very thirsty while the baby is nursing. Water, milk, and fruit juices are excellent choices. In fact, if something is lacking in mom's current diet, mom's body will dip into her reserves of nutrients to keep breast milk nutrient-dense. However, you are going to need your body to be healthy for a long time to take care of your growing child, so don't short change yourself! Be assured that the composition of nutrients in human milk is consistent. A nutrition shortage for mom is more like to reduce the quantity of milk than the quality of the milk for baby.³

Table 2 Level of knowledge of postnatal mothers regarding postnatal diet

Sl no	level of knowledge	score	frequency	percentage
1	Excellent	25 and above	0	0%
2	Very good	19-24	0	0%
3	Good	13-18	0	0%
4	Average	7-12	14	14%\
5	Poor	0-6	46	46%

The success of lactation as well as the health status of infant depends entirely on type of diet consumed by women during pregnancy and lactation. The quality and quantity of mother's milk is maintained up to some extent by drawing the nutrients from her body reserve indicating additional demand for different nutrients during lactation. Diet of many lactating mothers in our country is poor and lack in many nutrients. Thus

special attention should be given to the diet of mother during lactation.⁴

Objectives of the study

- To determine the knowledge of postnatal mothers on postnatal diet.
- To find an association between the knowledge scores of postnatal mothers on postnatal diet with selected demographic variables.
- To develop and distribute an information booklet on postnatal diet

METHOD

A descriptive survey approach for was used for this study. The sample consisted of 60 postnatal mothers admitted in postnatal ward of YMCH, Mangalore. Sample was selected by purposive sampling technique. Structured interview schedule was used to collect the data from samples. The collected data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Inclusion criteria

Postnatal mothers

- who are admitted in postnatal ward of Yenepoya Medical College Hospital , Mangalore
- who are between the age group of 19-35 years
- who are able to understand Kannada and English

Exclusion criteria

Postnatal mothers

- Who have attended educational programme on postnatal diet

Data Analysis

- Data was organized in master sheets
- Demographic data was analyzed using frequency and percentage.
- Knowledge score was analyzed by computing frequency and percentage.
- Association between knowledge level with selected variables was calculated Using Chi- square.
- Analyzed data will be presented in the form of tables, figures.

RESULTS

Part I: Description of the demographic characteristics of the samples. (Table I)

Major findings of the study are (40%) of postnatal mothers were in the age group of 21 to 25 years. (55 %) of them were in Muslim religion. (23.3%) had studied up to high school level. (26%) of them are coolie workers. (36.66%) were from nuclear family. (35%) had income of 4001- 5000and 88 .8 % of them had no previous information regarding postnatal diet.

Part II: Analysis of the existing knowledge of the postnatal mothers regarding postnatal diet (Table II)

Assessment of the level of knowledge of postnatal mothers reveals that 14 percentages of mothers had average knowledge, 46 percentage women had poor knowledge Analysis shows that postnatal mothers had highest mean percentage of (22.42%) of knowledge in postnatal diet, which had a mean and SD of 2.4667± 4.379. Mean percentage in the area of general aspects

Table 3 Area wise mean, standard deviation, mean percentage of knowledge score

Sl. No.	Area of knowledge	Maximum possible score	Mean score	Sd	Mean percentage
1	General aspects on postnatal diet	5	0.6333	1.36176	12.666
2	Balanced diet	2	0.3667	0.7792	18.335
3	Elements of balanced diet	7	1.4	2.54728	20
4.	Diet for lactating mothers	11	2.4667	4.37963	22.42
5	Foods to avoid when breast feeding	2	0.2333	0.42652	11.66
6	Tips on food safety and preparation	3	0.6333	1.21527	21.11

Table 4 significance between the levels of knowledge of the subject with demographic variable

Sl no	Demographic variables	Median less than 6	Median more than 6	Calculated d value χ^2	Df	Inference
	Age					
1	a) Less than 26 years	29	5	3.265	1	P<0.05 NS
	b) More than 26 years	17	9			
	Religion					
2	a) Hindu and Muslim	33	8	1.057	1	P<0.05 NS
	b) Christian and other	13	6			
	Educational Status					
3	a) Primary, High school and Higher secondary	25	7	0.082	1	P<0.05 NS
	b) Graduate, Post Graduate and Others	21	7			
	Occupation					
4	a) Professional, Coolie workers and Unemployed/ housewife	32	6	3.297	1	P<0.05 NS
	b) Skilled workers, Others	14	8			
	Type of family					
5	a) Nuclear family and Joint family	31	5	3.47	1	P<0.05 NS
	b) Extended	15	9			
	Monthly Income					
6	a) Less than Rs.5000	24	9	0.636	1	P<0.05 NS
	b) Above Rs. 5,001	22	5			
	Eating habits					
7	a) Vegetarian	8	2	0.075	1	P<0.05 NS
	b) Non vegetarian	38	12			
	Any previous information regarding diet during lactation?					
8	a) Yes	6	1	0.363	1	P<0.05 NS
	b) No	40	13			

of diet was 12.666 percentage with a mean and SD of 2.466±1.361.

The least mean percentage (11.66%) in the area of food to be avoided, had a mean and SD of 0.2333±0.426. However the total mean score was 5.73 ± 1.071 with a mean percentage of 11.46%. This reveals that postnatal mothers have less knowledge regarding postnatal diet.

Part III: association between knowledge of the postnatal mothers on postnatal diet with selected demographic variables. (table iv)

The association of knowledge scores with selected demographic variables was found out using Chi square test.

There was no significant association between knowledge score and selected demographic variables such as age ($\chi^2=3.265$, $P>0.05$), religion ($\chi^2=1.057$, $P>0.05$), educational status ($\chi^2=0.082$, $P>0.05$), occupation ($\chi^2=3.297$, $P>0.05$), type of family ($\chi^2=3.47$, $P>0.05$), income ($\chi^2=0.936$, $P>0.05$), eating habits ($\chi^2= 0.075$),.

Source of information ($\chi^2=0.363$, $P>0.05$) at 0.05 level of significance.

DISCUSSION

Major findings of the study

Section I: Sample characteristics

Major findings of the study are (40%) of postnatal mothers were in the age group of 21 to 25 years. (55 %) of them were in

Muslim religion. (23.3%) had studied up to high school level. (26%) of them are coolie workers. (36.66%) were from nuclear family. (35%) had income of 4001- 5000 and 48% of them had no previous information regarding postnatal diet.

The findings of the study were supported by a study conducted in Kinaye to assess the knowledge regarding postnatal diet among postnatal mothers. The study revealed that (68%) of postnatal mothers were in the age group of 21 to 25 years. 58% had up to primary school. (69%) of them house wives. (32%) were from nuclear family. (62%) had income of 4000-5000 and (79%) of them had no previous knowledge.

Section II: Level of knowledge regarding postnatal diet among postnatal mothers:

It was found that 14 percentage of mothers had average knowledge, 46 percentage of mothers had poor knowledge. This finding was supported by a study conducted in Belgaum to assess the knowledge regarding postnatal diet. This study shows that (54%) of postnatal mother had average knowledge and (38%) of them had poor knowledge

Section III: Association between knowledge score and selected demographic variables.

There was no significant association was found between knowledge score and selected demographic variables such as age ($\chi^2=3.265$, $P>0.05$), religion ($\chi^2=1.057$, $P>0.05$), educational status ($\chi^2=0.082$, $P>0.05$), occupation ($\chi^2=3.297$, $P>0.05$), type of family ($\chi^2=3.47$, $P>0.05$), income ($\chi^2=0.936$, $P>0.05$), eating habits ($\chi^2= 0.075$), source of information

($t=0.363$, $P>0.05$) at 0.05 level of significance. The findings was supported by a study conducted in Belgaum to assess the knowledge of postnatal mothers on postnatal diet which showed that there is no significant association between knowledge score and selected demographic variables such as age, education, occupation, family, income and source of information.

Delimitation

60 postnatal mothers

- Assessing only the items which are included in the interview schedule
- Women who can understand Kannada or English.
- The period of data collection.

Recommendations

- A similar study on a large sample may help to draw more definite conclusions and generalization.
- A similar study can be conducted on assessing the effectiveness of information booklet on postnatal diet

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