

## “Knowledge and practice regarding essential newborn care among the primi-mothers”- A Descriptive study

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### Abstract:

Newborn babies are the foundation of life, with the first week being crucial. Around 30 million babies worldwide face premature birth, low birth weight, or illness annually. In India, 50-60% of infant deaths occur within the first month, with over half happening in the first week due to a lack of neonatal care knowledge. Education and specialized care from mother and health professionals are essential to reduce mortality rates.

**Methodology:** adopted was a quantitative, non-experimental a descriptive research design A well-structured questionnaire was used 63 primi-mothers admitted in PNC who are interested and cooperative. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used

**Result:** The study focused on 63 participants aged 18 to 25, with 79% falling within this range. 76% of the participants identified as Hindu. 35% completed secondary education, while 28% completed primary education. 85% were housewives, with 37% having a family income of 10,001-15,000. 97% had prior knowledge of essential newborn care, with 76% receiving information from family members and nurses. When assessing knowledge of specific components of newborn care such as feeding, cord care, thermoregulation, immunization, eye care, and kangaroo mother care, most mothers demonstrated good knowledge.

**Conclusion:** study highlighted the importance of education and knowledge and practice in essential newborn care practices among mothers.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, Practice, Essential newborn care, Primi-mothers

### Introduction:

#### “Mothers hold their child’s hand for a moment and their heart of a lifetime”

The essential care of a healthy newborn is best provided by mothers under the supervision of nursing personnel or basic care providers. This comprehensive strategy aims to reduce newborn mortality rates through cost-effective interventions before conception, during pregnancy, immediately after birth, and during the post-natal period. In India, a significant number of infant deaths occur within the first year of life, with two-thirds happening in the first month or neonatal period. Three-quarters of neonatal deaths occur within the first day of life. Majority of healthy newborns do not require resuscitation at birth, as they cry and breathe spontaneously. They only require warmth, breastfeeding, close observation for early problem detection, and protection from infections and injuries. Care should include kangaroo mother care, breastfeeding initiation within the first hour, proper cord care, eye care, immunization, warmth provision, and regular monitoring for growth, development, and signs of illness.

According to a UNICEF report, newborn mortality rates vary significantly among countries, with India ranking 12th among lower middle-income nations. Every year, an alarming number of newborns die worldwide within 28 days of birth, with a substantial portion of neonatal deaths occurring in India. The country faces disparities in neonatal mortality rates among states, with some regions performing better than others due to factors like literacy and family planning.

A study conducted in Bangalore, India assessed the knowledge, practices, and attitudes of primigravida mothers on newborn care. Results showed that while mothers had adequate knowledge, practices, and attitudes related to newborn care, there were still gaps in proper implementation and attitudes. This underscores the importance of educational programs targeting primigravida mothers to improve newborn care practices.

The birth of a newborn is a joyous occasion, and it is essential to provide structured teaching programs to mothers on newborn care practices at home. WHO emphasizes the need for an integrated approach, good feeding practices, immunization, hygiene, and healthy child development to reduce child mortality rates. Education plays a crucial role in reducing newborn mortality and morbidity rates, and efforts should be made to empower mothers with the knowledge and skills to care for their newborns effectively. This study deals with 1) Assessing the knowledge regarding essential newborn care in primi-mothers. 2) Assessing essential newborn care practices in primi-mothers. 3) Find out the association between the demographical variables with knowledge and practices regarding essential newborn care.

## Methodology

Methodology adopted was a quantitative research approach was used and non-experimental a descriptive research design was used, A well-structured questionnaire consists of three sections. Demo-graphical variables; knowledge regarding essential newborn care and assessing the practices apply in essential newborn care by formed yes or no type questionnaire. Total 63 primi-mothers admitted in PNC wards in selected hospitals. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used for selecting mothers who met the designed criteria during the period of data collection.

## Result:

The study findings analyzed demographic variables of 63 participants, including age group, religious status, educational background, occupational status, and monthly family income. Most participants were aged 18-25, Hindu, housewives, and had previous knowledge of essential newborn care. The majority obtained information from family members and nurses.

In terms of knowledge about essential newborn care, the participants had varying levels of knowledge, with some mothers showing excellent knowledge. When assessing knowledge of specific components of newborn care such as feeding, cord care, thermoregulation, immunization, eye care, and kangaroo mother care, most mothers demonstrated good knowledge.

Regarding practice skills related to newborn care, 80% of mothers were found to have good practice, with the remaining 20% exhibiting poor practice. Common practices included breastfeeding every 2 hours, burping newborns after feeding, keeping newborns warm, handwashing before touching the baby, following immunization schedules, and practicing eye care. However, only a third of mothers practiced kangaroo mother care.

Chi-Square tests were conducted to analyze the association between demographic variables (age, occupation) and practice score, as well as between demographic variables (age, source of information) and practice score. The results showed a significant association between age, occupation, and practice score, as well as between age, source of information, and practice score.

Overall, The findings can be used to develop interventions and educational programs aimed at improving newborn care practices among primi-mothers.

## Discussion

The study discusses the importance of educating mothers on essential newborn care practices to reduce neonatal morbidity and mortality rates. The study involved 63 participants, with the majority being between 18-25 years old, Hindu, housewives, and having a family income between 10,001-15,000. Most participants had previous knowledge of essential newborn care, obtained information from family members and nurses, and had varying levels of knowledge on the topic.

Another study conducted in a multispecialty hospital in Chennai assessed the knowledge and practice of essential newborn care among primi-mothers. The findings revealed varying levels of knowledge and practice among the participants, with some having excellent knowledge and best practices. The study also found significant associations between demographic variables such as age and occupation with practice scores.

The results of the study align with previous research by Meghadipa Madal and Anuradha Ghosh, which highlighted the influence of mothers' educational and socio-economic status on their knowledge and practice of newborn care. The present study also found a significant association between knowledge of newborn care and mothers' educational status, particularly those with primary school education.

Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of educating mothers on essential newborn care practices to improve neonatal outcomes and reduce morbidity and mortality rates. Additionally, it highlights the need to consider demographic factors such as age and occupation when assessing knowledge and practice in this area.

## CONCLUSIONS:

The study found that primi-mothers in a selected hospital have insufficient knowledge and practice of essential newborn care, likely due to common home deliveries and short hospital stays. Outreach education and care programs can help improve newborn care for these mothers. The study also revealed that primipara mothers from lower socioeconomic and educational backgrounds had the most deficiencies in knowledge and practice. To address these gaps, better care and health education should be provided at the primary care level. The study recommends further research, comparative studies between rural and urban mothers, and the use of teaching materials and individual counseling to improve maternal knowledge of newborn care.

**Implication of the study:** Nursing education in India is evolving, with a focus on essential newborn care. Nurses must educate mothers on newborn care to reduce infant mortality rates, and nursing research in this area is needed. In nursing practice, nurses in clinical and community settings play a crucial role in educating expectant and postnatal mothers on newborn care. Nursing administration should plan education programs and promote initiatives such as breastfeeding weeks and immunization schedules. Nursing services should focus on comprehensive healthcare, updating knowledge on newborn care, and conducting continuous education programs for nurses. Nursing research should focus on innovative teaching methods and evidence-based practice to improve care for newborns and mothers.

Keeping in view the findings of the study the following recommendations are made: -

1. Essential newborn care information should be provided to mothers during both the antenatal and postnatal periods.
2. More maternal education is needed during antenatal care on cord care, eye care, thermoregulation and immunization.
3. More health awareness campaigns on essential newborn care are required for the mothers to improve maternal knowledge and practice.
4. A study should be conducted to assess the pros and cons of traditional care practices.
5. An experimental study to assess the effectiveness of practical skill training on newborn care should be conducted on primi mothers.

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