

A study to assess the knowledge and practice of postnatal mothers on prevention of selected puerperal infections in a selected maternity hospital

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Abstract

Motherhood should be a time of expectations and joy for a woman, her family and her community. For woman in developing countries, however the reality of motherhood is often grim. For these women motherhood is often marred by unforeseen complications of pregnancy and child birth and among these complications, the one of the most common one is the puerperal infection, commonly known as postnatal sepsis which involves infections of genital organs that occur during the first six weeks after child birth. The most common Puerperal infections include endometritis, respiratory tract infections, urinary tract infections, wound infections and mastitis. Puerperal infection is the leading cause of nosocomial infections, maternal morbidity and mortality.

Method: The purpose of the study was to assess the knowledge and practice of postnatal mothers on prevention of selected puerperal infections. A non-experimental survey approach with a descriptive study design was adopted. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample and a structured interview schedule was developed to collect the data from the subjects.

Result: The overall mean percentage of knowledge score was 52% and the overall practice score was 66.8% on prevention of puerperal infections.

Conclusion: The knowledge and practice of postnatal mothers on preventions of puerperal infections was not adequate and the study recommended for health educational packages for the postnatal mothers on prevention of puerperal infections.

Keywords: Postnatal mothers, puerperal infections, knowledge, practice, Maternity hospital.

Introduction

The term puerperal infection refers to a bacterial infection following child birth. It is also referred as puerperal or postpartum fever or child bed fever. The genital tract, particularly the uterus is the most commonly infected site. In some cases infection can spread to others points in the body ^[1]. Widespread infection or sepsis is a rare, but potentially fatal complication. Historically puerperal sepsis is being a common pregnancy related condition which could eventually lead to Obstetric shock or even death ^[3,4].

Postnatal fever arises from several causes. A woman's susceptibility to developing an infection is related such factors as caesarean section, prolonged labor, and obesity, anemia and poor prenatal nutrition ^[6, 7]. The significance of postnatal infection is that it delays mother-infant bonding and breast feeding. This may lead to prolonged hospital stay or readmission to the hospital, an added expense ^[9]. The nurse is in a unique position to identify the woman at risk, to recognize early warning signs and to provide timely care, teaching and counseling ^[10].

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the knowledge of post natal mothers on prevention of selected puerperal infections in a selected maternity hospital.
2. To assess the practice of post natal mothers on prevention of selected puerperal infections in a selected maternity hospital.
3. To find the association of knowledge and practice of postnatal mothers on prevention of selected puerperal infections with the selected demographic variables.

Methodology

A non-experimental survey approach with a descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The samples include 50 post natal mothers selected by purposive sampling technique. The tool developed and used for data collection was structured interview schedule. The data was analyzed and interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Result

Demographic characteristics

- The majority of the postnatal mothers were in the age group of 20 to 25 years, with the educational status of primary and secondary education.
- Most of the postnatal mothers were housewives.
- Majority of postnatal mothers were from Hindu religion, belonged to joint families, were from urban residential area and with the family income less than 10000 rupees per month.
- Many of the postnatal mothers were paraprime, with regular antenatal checkup and they were used to get information from Health personnel.

Assessment of knowledge and practices of postnatal mothers on prevention of selected puerperal infections:

The findings of the study revealed that the mean percentage of knowledge score of postnatal mothers was 52% and the mean percentage of practice score was 66.8% on prevention of puerperal infections.

Further it also showed that 65% of the postnatal mothers had inadequate level of knowledge, 35% had moderate level of knowledge and none of the mothers had adequate knowledge on prevention of puerperal infections.

The postnatal mothers practice revealed that 62% of mothers had inadequate level of practice, 38% of the postnatal mothers

had moderate level of practice and none of the mothers had adequate practice on prevention of puerperal infections.

Table 1: Area Wise Knowledge Score of Postnatal Mothers on Prevention of Selected Puerperal Infections

N = 50

Sl. No.	Areas	Maximum Score	Range	Knowledge scores		
				Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean%
1.	Basic information	7	1-5	10.8	2.6	13.82
2.	Wound infections	11	4-8	13.1	6.1	16.77
3.	Respiratory tract infections	4	1-4	21.9	2.7	28.04
4.	Breast infections	5	1-4	16.9	2.1	21.63
5.	Urinary tract infections	3	1-3	15.4	2.1	19.71
	Total	30	9-22	78.1	15.6	

The data presented in the above table-1 reveals the Mean \pm Standard Deviation knowledge scores of postnatal mothers on Basic information 10.8 \pm 2.6, Wound infections 13.1 \pm 6.1,

Respiratory tract infections 21.9 \pm 2.7, Breast infections 16.9 \pm 2.1, Urinary tract infections 15.4 \pm 2.1 and total knowledge score 78.1 \pm 15.6 respectively.

Table 2: Area Wise Practice Score of Postnatal Mothers on Prevention of Selected Puerperal Infections

N = 50

Sl. No	Areas	Maximum Score	Range	Practice score		
				Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean%
1.	Wound infections	5	2-5	11.2	3.9	14.00
2.	Respiratory tract infections	2	1-2	26.6	1.0	33.25
3.	Breast infections	6	1-6	22.2	3.7	27.75
4.	Urinary tract infections	3	1-3	20.0	2.1	25.00
	Total	16	7-16	80.0	10.7	

The data presented in the above table-2 shows that the Mean \pm Standard Deviation practice scores of postnatal mothers on Wound infections 11.2 \pm 3.9, Respiratory tract infections 26.6 \pm 1.0, Breast infections 22.2 \pm 3.7, Urinary tract infections 20.0 \pm 2.1 and total practice score 80.0 \pm 10.7 respectively.

Association of Knowledge and Practice of Postnatal Mothers with Selected Demographic Variables

Association of knowledge of postnatal mothers with selected demographic variables: A statistically significant association was found between knowledge score and the age (6.45, df =49 at $p<0.05$), educational status (41.0, df=49 at $p<0.05$), residential area and with sources of information.

There was no significant association of knowledge score and religion, type of family and para of the post natal mothers on prevention of selected puerperal infections.

Association of practice of postnatal mothers with selected demographic variables:

The study found statistically significant association of practice score and age (8.47, df =49 at $p<0.05$), religion, education status (10.66, df=49 at $p<0.05$), type of family, residential area, sources of information and para of the post natal mothers on prevention of selected puerperal infection.

Discussion

The majority of the mothers were in the age group of 20-25 years and with educational status of primary and secondary education. The findings of present study are similar to the study conducted by Mohammad Issa Ahmad² on puerperal sepsis.

Higher the educations better the knowledge which is supported by a significant association between knowledge and educational status. Higher the education lesser the

practice was noticed, which established a statistically significant association between practice and educational status of the postnatal mothers on prevention of selected puerperal infections.

The highest mean percentage of knowledge score was found among Hindus when compared to Muslims. The result established a non-significant association between knowledge and religion of the mothers on prevention of selected puerperal infections. The mean percentage of practice scores also found better among mothers from Hindu religion than the mothers from Muslim religion.

However a statistically significant association was found between a practice and religion of the mothers. The findings of the study are similar to the findings of the study conducted by Smith JB^[8].

Conclusion

The study findings reveal that the knowledge and practice of post natal mothers on prevention of selected puerperal infections was inadequate. This emphasizes the need for appropriate health education packages for the postnatal mothers to improve their knowledge and making them to adopt the right practices related to child birth and maternal care.

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