

# Awareness of Infant Feeding: Nursing Program Student Survey

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**Abstract**—*Child nutrition is an important factor for their physical and neuro-psychological development and overall health not only in childhood but also in adulthood. The World Health Organization recommends that mothers should be informed about the advantages and the enormous benefits of breastfeeding. It is part of the professional responsibility of nurses to promote good health care habits among women in fertile age and raise the overall health awareness of parents. The aim of the study was to research the knowledge of infant feeding among students in the Nursing Program. An anonymous survey was conducted among students in the Nursing I class. The survey group included a total of 51 students, ranging from 19 to 47 years old. All analyses were conducted using Statgraphics Plus software, version 2.1. It was found that students rate the advantages of breastfeeding for the mother as follows: faster recovery (29.4%); reduces the risk of cancer in women (21.6%), faster recovery of the weight of the mother before birth (27.5%). The majority of students were able to point out specific steps to successful breastfeeding and the respective time schedules of infant feeding (70%). The study found less satisfactory results of the participants' knowledge on how to prepare infant dairy blends 19 (30.3%) and the duration of breastfeeding in 11 (21.6%). It can be concluded that students in the Nursing Program demonstrate good knowledge of infant nutrition.*

**Keywords:** *Infant Nutrition, Health Awareness Promotion, Student Knowledge, Nurse, Education.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Healthy nutrition of child is an important factor for his/her physical and nervous-psyche development.<sup>1,2</sup> World Health Organization recommend mothers to be informed on the advantages of breast feeding. Specialists in health care centers exercise health-promotion initiatives among women in fertile age, take care of them and improve health awareness of parents. Infants development, their health as well the health of the mother is based on protection, encouragement and support of breast feeding by nurses and midwives. Promotion of early breast feeding is a trend in terms of national, public support during recent years. UNICEF emphasis: "Breast milk is the best food for infants and no other food or liquid can replace it during first few months of the new born".<sup>3,4,5,6</sup>

Job description of nurses includes activities like promotion of breast feeding; counseling for hygiene and feeding; consultations on bring up the new born, including nutrition, hygiene, immunizations, monitoring of the nutrition regimen for infants etc.<sup>7</sup> The obligatory subject "Nurse's cares at homes", in the syllabus of specialty "Nurse" is studied II and III semester. Thus they are made responsible to promote and encourage Brest feeding in their community.

So this study is conducted on nursing students with the aim to assess the awareness of students regarding Brest feeding and its advantages.

## II. METHODOLOGY

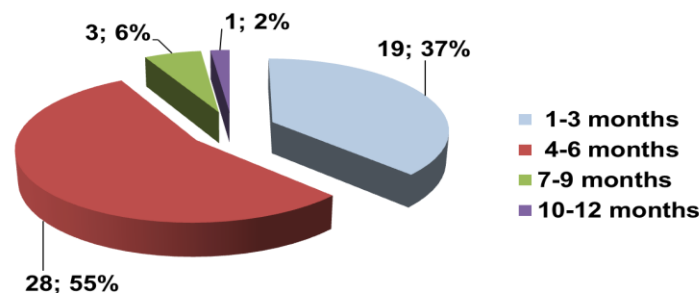
This community based survey was conducted on 51 Nursing students regarding awareness of breast feeding and its advantages in these studied nursing students. A direct anonymous questionnaire form was used among 51 students of specialty "Nurse" after taking written informed consent. This questionnaire is about questions related to breast feeding and its advantages. Survey was conducted upon performance of training ("Nurse's cares at homes").

## III. RESULTS

Out of 51 nursing students, 42 (82%) were unmarried whereas only 9 (18%) were married. These students were in age range of 19 to 47 years with mean age 20 years. Female prepondance was clearly observed in surveys students i.e. 48 (94%) females v/s 3 (6%) males.

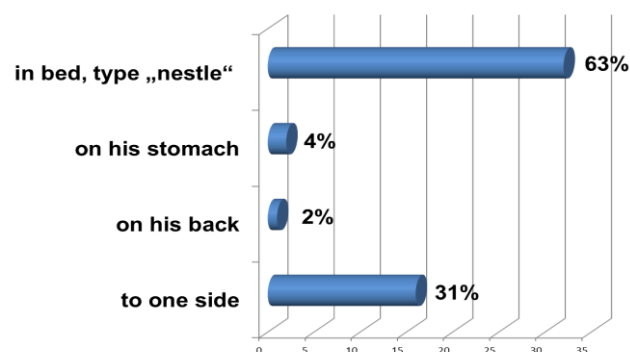
Majority of students– 28 (55%) have given the answer similar to WHO recommendations regarding exclusive breast feeding i.e. first 4-6months after delivery. "Exclusively" feeding means solely mother's breast feeding without taking any other food and liquids, including water. A significant number of interviewed said that breast feeding satisfy nutrition needs of infant to the age of 3 months (Figure1).

**Figure 1**  
**Recommended time for breast feeding for satisfy nutrition needs of infant**



Majority of students (78%) have familiarised with the recommendations of median time of breast feeding that should be 15-20 minutes. Position of infant's body after feeding also influences the comfort of the baby and food digestion. It has been proved that placing the infant in bed, type "nestle" is more comfortable compared to the position of one side as it provides semi-fetal position of body and resembles the womb of mother. The knowledge of students on that element of feeding was correct only in 63% of students.(Figure 2)

**Figure 2**  
**Distribution of replies to the question: Position of infant's body after feeding**



When advantages of breast feeding for mother were asked, students recognize the benefits to varying degrees. The most significant advantage for mother nominated from 33 (64.70%) of students is breast feeding facilities quicker the restoration of normal size of womb and reduces bleeding. (Table 1)

**Table 1**  
**Awareness of students about Advantages of breast feeding for the mother**

S. No.	Advantages	Number (%)
1	Breast feeding facilities quicker the restoration of normal size of womb and reduces bleeding.	33 (64.70)
2	Delay ovulation and reduce the risk of premature pregnancy.	16 (31.37)
3	Faster gaining of mother's weight before delivery.	26 (50.98)
4	Reduce the risk of cancer to breast, womb and ovaries.	29 (56.86)
5	Breast feeding is easier than bottle feeding and no need to prepare milk, sterilize bottle and make the infant wait.	21 (41.17)

Majority (76.47%) of respondents indicating an advantage of breastfeeding for children secure necessary quantity proteins, hydrocarbons and fats to satisfy nutrition needs of infant (Table 2).

**Table 2**  
**Awareness of students about Advantages of breast feeding for Infant**

S. No.	Advantages	Number (%)
1	Secure necessary quantity proteins, hydrocarbons and fats to satisfy nutrition needs of infant.	39 (76.47)
2	Secure related to immunity components that prevent unspecific protection against infectious diseases.	36 (70.58)
3	Secure hormones and other biologic active substances, required for physical and neuro-psychological development of the infant.	24 (47.05)
4	Secure protection against unbearable feeling and or / allergies to foodstuffs and reduce the risk of obesity in later age.	12 (23.52)
5	Stimulate relation mother-child as psycho-emotional experience.	25 (49.01)

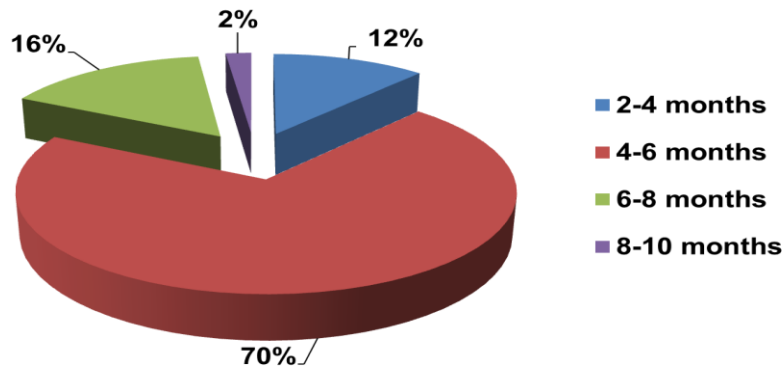
Awareness about steps for successful breast feeding were also asked with students. All students point out as most as a necessary step that mothers and infants should be accommodated together and not separated. The staff is to encourage mothers to breast feed their babies. (Table 3)

**Table 3**  
**Awareness of students about Steps for Successful Breast Feeding**

S. No.	Steps for successful breast feeding	Number (%)
1	There should be written directions to encourage breast feeding, theoretical and practical training of the staff.	29 (56.86)
2	Pregnant women should be informed about the advantages and practical performance of breast feeding.	43 (84.31)
3	Infant should be placed to breast at the first minutes after delivery.	41 (80.39)
4	The staff should explain to mothers how to feed, preserve and stimulate milk production. .	37 (72.54)
5	New born should not take liquids or other foods as additives to mother's milk, exceptions allowed only by medical reasons.	23 (45.09)
6	Mothers and infants should be accommodated together and not separated. The staff is to encourage mothers to breast feed their babies.	51 (100)
7	Infants should not be given rubbery bibs or toys.	13 (25.49)
8	To encourage creation of groups for breast feeding and opportunities for contact after discharge.	16 (31.37)

Knowledge of students about recommended age to commence introduction of conventional meals for infant artificial feeding. Majority of students gave answer– 4-6 months (70%) and only 2% were in opinion to start artificial feeding at 8-10 months of age. (Figure 3)

**Figure 3**  
**Distribution of students as per recommended age to start introduction of vegetable Purees**



#### IV. DISCUSSION

Breast feeding is very useful with proven advantages for the new born as well for mother. Natural feeding impacts favorably reverse involution of womb. Reduce probability of mammal cancer and ovaries; faster restore weight and figure of woman after delivery. Advantages of breast feeding are related to proper grow-up and development, prevention of various diseases (infections, allergies and skin eczemas, obesity, mellitus diabetics).<sup>7,8,9,10</sup>

The numerous surveys have proved that the contact "skin in skin" at first hours after delivery and consequently are prerequisite for successful and continuous breast feeding and facilitate to build up better relation between mother and baby. American academy in pediatrics recommends breast feeding at first twelve months of infant's life. The recommendations of WHO and UNICEF on feeding of infants and children of early childhood are: placing on breast at 30-60 minutes after delivery, „exclusive" breast feeding in first 4-6 months after delivery, feeding „at demand" of infant, artificial feeding between 4-6 months and adequate, balanced nutrition of children.<sup>8,9,11</sup>

European society in paediatrics, gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition recommend artificial feeding of infant to start between 17<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> week. New food is given by spoon prior to breast feeding or adapted milk with healthy infant. For our country artificial feeding starts with vegetable paste, included in lunch meal. Vegetable and meat paste provide iron in organism as the reserves of iron exhaust after 4<sup>th</sup> month. According definitions of WHO artificial foods are all foodstuffs industrially or home prepared, used as additives to mother's milk or its substitutes to adequately satisfy nutrition and energy needs of children. A lot of mothers due to financial reasons or lack of information introduce early sour cow milk and replace the mother's milk. It is not appropriate it contains much more whites, Na, Ka and P, that burden immature renal system of the infant.<sup>12</sup> Taking cow milk prior to 4-months of age is related to high risk of allergy, risk of iron-deficiency anaemia, mellitus diabetics type 1, disturbances in child development.<sup>13,14</sup>

Currently in Bulgaria is going on the national program to improve mother and children.<sup>15,16</sup> GP doctors, nurses and specialists of pre-hospital aid carry out consultations as a part of promotion-prophylactic activities for mothers and children; give instructions for locomotion and nutrition regimen of pregnant woman, give advices on nutrition issues, artificial feeding, immunizations.<sup>17,18</sup> Medical establishments accredited as „Hospital– friend of the baby “, secure information of pregnant women on advantages and techniques for successful breast feeding.

## V. CONCLUSION

Nursing students are familiar with the advantages of breast feeding for mother and infant and are convinced in its support. They are in favor to encourage Brest feeding. Medical specialists should inform young mothers on advantage of breast feeding at time of pregnancy and recommend it during first six months after delivery. Proper and balanced nutrition of child secure optimum development and protects form diseases in mature age. It is necessary to create more efficient strategies for consultations as well more frequent usage of media, especially TV to promote breast feeding in communities.

## CONFLICT

None declared till date.

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