

Improving Breastfeeding Practices Through Convenient Breastfeeding Garments For Nursing Mothers In Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State.

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Abstract: The study was conducted to Improve Breastfeeding Practices through Convenient Breastfeeding Garments for Nursing Mothers in Makurdi Metropolis. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted the Survey Research to collate the data needed for analysis. The population of the study comprised of 259 Nursing Mothers registered in five (5) Government hospitals in Makurdi metropolis between 21st March and 26th April, 2016. A sample of 100 Nursing Mothers was proportionally selected from the five hospitals. The findings of the study revealed that most Nursing Mothers in Makurdi Metropolis find it challenging or avoid breastfeeding their babies in public gatherings like weddings, political meetings, workshops/seminars and places of worship, because they have to lift up their blouses and even gowns in the attempt to have access to their breast for breastfeeding. This action exposes their breast, back and tummy, which makes most Nursing Mothers resort to using infant formula in feeding their babies too early before they even reach age six months, which makes babies vulnerable to childhood diseases and diseases due to unhygienic preparation of the infant formula. The study also identified that the most convenient garment by both the young and older Nursing Mothers were blouses with zip at both sides of the bust line, followed by tight fitted blouse with Velcro at both bust line, and then gowns with zip across the bust line. The study concluded that with the provision of breastfeeding garments with concealed openings and closures, that would enable Nursing Mothers breastfeed discretely without exposure of breast, back or tummy; Nursing mothers in Makurdi metropolis were willing to breastfeed their babies anytime, anywhere and delay the introduction of complementary food until after the WHO recommended six months of continuous breastfeeding.

Key words: Breastfeeding, Convenience, Concealment.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Breastfeeding is the ideal feeding of babies and young infants with milk from a woman's breast. The American Association of Pediatrics promotes breastfeeding as the best source of infant nutrition (Eidelman & Feldman-Winter, 2005). Breast milk is a complete food for a baby. It is the first communication pathway between a Mother and her baby. It contains all the nutrients for normal growth and development of the baby from birth to the first six months of life. The World Health Organization (WHO), states that the optimal feeding pattern for overall child survival is exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continued breastfeeding together with appropriate complementary food for up to 2 years (WHO, 2001).

Exclusive breastfeeding during the first year of a child's life ensures the provision of certain biological and physiological needs and therefore increases the probability of survival during this critical stage of development. Consequently, Mothers are encouraged to breastfeed exclusively in the first six months of a child's life, in ante-natal and post-natal clinical sessions and through a range of mass media (Tyndall et al, 2016). A review of studies from developing countries shows that infants who are not breastfed are 6-10 times more likely to die in the first few months of life than infants who are breastfed. Diarrhea and pneumonia are also more common in infants who are artificially fed, and are responsible for many deaths. Other acute infections including *Haemophilus influenza*, meningitis and urinary tract infections are less common in and less severe in breastfed infants. The studies also revealed that artificially fed children have an increased risk of long-term

diseases with an immunological basis, including, Asthma, Type 1 diabetes and Ulcerative colitis (WHO 2009, in Goyal et al, 2011). WHO estimates that 1.5 million infants die as a result of diarrhea every year because they are not breastfed.

Breastfeeding is complimentary as it has benefits for both the Mother and child. For the mother, the risk of developing Breast Cancer is reduced in women who have ever breastfed. Several studies indicate that each month of breastfeeding during a woman's lifetime reduces the risk of Breast Cancer (Furberg et al 1999 in Weddig, 2011). In a study conducted by Stuebe et al (2009), women who breastfed for a total of two years or more over their lifetime had a significantly decreased risk of (37%) for cardiovascular diseases, including strokes, later in life. Also women without a medical history of gestational diabetes, each year of breastfeeding reduces the risk of developing type II diabetes (Hoddinott et al, 2008).

Despite the importance of exclusive breastfeeding approach to infant nutrition in reducing infant mortality, most Nursing Mothers in Nigeria find it challenging or avoid breastfeeding their babies in public gatherings like weddings, political meetings, workshops/seminars and places of worship, because they have to lift up their blouses and even gowns in the attempt to have access to their breast for breastfeeding. This action exposes their breast, back and tummy, which makes most Nursing Mothers resort to using infant formula in feeding their babies too early before they even reach age six months, which makes babies vulnerable to childhood diseases and diseases due to unhygienic preparation of the infant formula. However, effective breastfeeding is crucial for getting all the benefits of breastfeeding, hence this study focuses on Improving Breastfeeding Practices through Convenient Breastfeeding Garments for Nursing Mothers in Makurdi Metropolis.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to Improve Breastfeeding Practices through Convenient Breastfeeding Garments for Nursing Mothers in Makurdi Metropolis. Specifically the study sought to:

- i. Identify challenges faced by Nursing Mothers evolving from garments in Makurdi Metropolis.
- ii. Identify Convenient Breastfeeding Garments for Nursing Mothers in Makurdi Metropolis.

Research Questions

- i. What are the differences between responses of Young Nursing Mothers (15-20 years) and Older Nursing Mothers (45 years above) on challenges faced during breastfeeding evolving from garments?
- ii. What are the differences between responses of Young Nursing Mothers (15-20 years) and Older Nursing Mothers (45 years above) on the selection of breastfeeding garments with concealed openings and closures.

Research Hypotheses

- ii. H₀₁: There is no significant difference between responses of Nursing Mothers (15-20 years) and Older Nursing Mothers (45 years and above) on challenges faced during breastfeeding evolving from garments?
- iii. H₀₂: There is no significant difference between responses of Young Nursing Mothers (15-20 years) and Older Nursing Mothers (45 years and above) on the selection of breastfeeding garments with concealed openings and closures.

II. METHODOLOGY

Area of Study: The study was carried out in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State, in government established hospitals. Makurdi LGA was created on 3rd February, 1976. It is located in Zone B of Benue State, North Central. It has Latitude 7.74 ° North and longitude 8.52° East. The Local Government shares boundaries with Guma LGA to the North-East. The LGA is divided into two major blocks by River Benue; North Bank and South Banks. According to the 2006 census, Makurdi had a population of 300,337 with a landmass of 820km². Makurdi town, the head quarters of the Local Government also serves as the state capital. Its location can best be described as the “Gateway” of the state to both the North and South. The indigenous dwellers are Tiv, Idoma, Igede and other ethnic groups. Makurdi LGA is endowed with great investment potentialities both in agro-allied and mineral resources.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of Nursing Mothers registered in Government hospitals in Makurdi metropolis totaling 519 women, between 21st March, 2016 and 26th April, 2016. (Field Data, 2016).

Sample of the Study

The sample of the study was drawn from the population of all Nursing Mothers in the five selected medical institutions in Makurdi metropolis which included Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Federal Medical Center Makurdi, Epidemiology Center Makurdi, General Hospital North-Bank and Family Support Programme Clinic Makurdi, all with a total of 259 registered Nursing Mothers. The sample size for each clinic was obtained

using proportionate sampling technique for the population. 100 Breastfeeding Mothers were proportionally selected from the five hospitals.

Instrument for Data Collection

Nursing Mother’s Opinion Questionnaire (NMOQ) was employed for collection of data. The questionnaire was divided into four sections.

Section A: sought information on the bio data of the respondents.

Section B: sought information on challenges encountered by Nursing Mothers evolving from Breastfeeding Garments.

Section C: sought information on the concealment of openings and closures of Breastfeeding Garment.

Section D: sought information on the Convenience of Breastfeeding Garments.

Spearman Brown reliability coefficient was used, a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.71$ was realized.

III. RESULTS

Research Question 1

- i. *What are the differences between responses of Young Nursing Mothers (15-20 years) and Older Nursing Mothers (45 years above) on challenges faced during breastfeeding evolving from garments?*

S/no	Item variable	SD	D	U	A	SA	\bar{x}	REMARK
1.	Tight fits are inconveniencing while breast-feeding.	0	10	6	29	55	4.29	Agree
2.	Dresses with buttons in front inconvenience the baby while breastfeeding.	0	30	14	28	28	3.54	Agree
3.	Dresses with frills/gathers/overlaps inconvenience the baby while breast feeding.	0	20	18	62	0	3.42	Agree
4.	Dresses with openings and closers positioned at the back makes the breast feeding exercise inconvenient.	0	0	21	26	53	4.32	Agree
5.	The style (silhouette) of garment can determine breast feeding in some place.	0	0	12	63	25	4.13	Agree
6.	Surface design of fabrics (lace with stones, embossment) causes inconvenience for the baby.	0	0	12	54	34	4.22	Agree
7.	Garment designs with over fitness causes pressure, which in turn, makes it inconvenient.	0	14	16	56	14	3.70	Agree
8.	Blouses that are too tight cause more pain and affect the milk supply for the baby.	0	0	0	85	15	4.15	Agree
9	Dresses without easy access to breast make the baby frustrated.	3	0	0	47	50	4.38	Agree

Table 1 : Responses of Young Nursing Mothers

Source: Field data 2016.

The respondents submitted that dresses with openings and closures positioned at the back inconvenience their breastfeeding exercise and encroaches on their privacy. 79% of the respondents confirmed the inconvenience in their breastfeeding exercise and encroachment on their privacy, with a mean of $\bar{x} = 4.32$. With respect to the style of garment determining breastfeeding in some places, 88% of the respondents with a mean of $\bar{x} = 4.22$ agreed that the style of the garment certainly determines whether they breastfeed in some places or not.

In a similar vein, 97% with a mean of $\bar{x} 4.38$ indicated that dresses without easy access to breast makes their babies frustrated when hungry and scouting for breast milk.

Considering dresses with frills/gathers/overlaps inconvenience their babies while breastfeeding, 62% of the respondents accepted that they cause inconvenience for their babies, with a corresponding mean of $\bar{x} 3.42$.

S/no	Item variable	SD	D	U	A	SA	\bar{x}	REMARK
1.	Tight fits are inconveniencing while breast-feeding.	5	6	4	40	45	4.14	Agree
2.	Dresses with buttons in front inconvenience the baby while breastfeeding.	9	30	0	46	13	3.18	Agree
3.	Dresses with frills/gathers/overlaps inconvenience the baby while breast feeding.	0	26	34	46	0	3.38	Agree
4.	Dresses with openings and closers positioned at the back makes the breast feeding exercise inconvenient.	3	12	6	4	75	4.36	Agree
5.	The style (silhouette) of garment can determine breast feeding in some place.	0	0	9	51	40	4.31	Agree
6.	Surface design of fabrics (lace with stones, embossment) causes inconvenience for the baby.	2	7	6	76	10	3.88	Agree
7.	Garment designs with over fitness causes pressure, which in turn, makes it inconvenient.	5	13	20	52	10	3.49	Agree
8.	Blouses that are too tight cause more pain and affect the milk supply for the baby.	1	7	21	51	20	3.82	Agree
9	Dresses without easy access to breast make the baby frustrated.	0	2	6	45	47	4.37	Agree

Table 2: Responses of Older Nursing Mothers

Source: Field data 2016.

The respondents 40 years and above also submitted that dresses with openings and closures positioned at the back inconvenience their breastfeeding exercise and encroaches on their privacy. A tallying **79%** of the respondents confirmed the inconvenience in their breastfeeding exercise and encroachment on their privacy, with a mean of $\bar{x} = 4.36$.

With respect to the style of garment determining breastfeeding in some places, **91%** of the respondents with a mean of $\bar{x} = 3.88$ agreed that the style of the garment certainly determines whether they breastfeed in some places or not.

In a similar vein, **92%** with a mean of $\bar{x} 4.37$ indicated that dresses without easy access to breast makes their babies frustrated when hungry and scouting for breast milk.

Considering dresses with frills/gathers/overlaps inconvenience their babies while breastfeeding, **46%** of the respondents accepted that they cause inconvenience for their babies, with a corresponding mean of $\bar{x} 3.42$. However, 34% of the respondents were undecided on whether frills/gathers/overlaps caused inconvenience for their babies while breastfeeding.

Research Question 2

What are the differences between responses of Young Nursing Mothers (15-20 years) and Older Nursing Mothers (45 years above) on the selection of breastfeeding garments with concealed openings and closures.



Blouse with Velcro at Burst line



Blouse with Zip at Burst line



Buba with Velcro at Princess line



Top with Zip at Princess line



Gown with Zip across Burst line



Table 2: Selection of Breastfeeding Garments by Younger Nursing Mothers

Breastfeeding Garments	Percentage
Top with Velcro at the Princes Line	15%
Blouse with Velcro at both Burst Line	23%
Top with zip at both sides of Burst Line	30%
Top with zip at Princes Line	15%
Gown with zip across Burst Line	17%

Table 2: Selection of Breastfeeding Garments by Older Nursing Mothers

Breastfeeding Garments	Percentage
Top with Velcro at the Princes Line	13%
Blouse with Velcro at both Burst Line	27%
Top with zip at both sides of Burst Line	25%
Top with zip at Princes Line	13%
Gown with zip across Burst Line	22%

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: *There is no significant difference between responses of Young Nursing Mothers (15-20 years) and Older Nursing Mothers (45 years above) on challenges faced during breastfeeding evolving from garments?*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	<i>Younger Mothers</i>	<i>Older Mothers</i>
Mean	3.84	3.68
Variance	1.024646465	2.401616162
Observations	100	100
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	170	
t Stat	0.864389849	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.194295897	
t Critical one-tail	1.653866318	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.388591793	
t Critical two-tail	1.974016669	

t Stat = 0.86 < t Critical = 1.97, therefore, we accept the null hypothesis. This means that both Young Nursing Mothers (15-20 years) and Older Nursing Mothers (45 years above) agree on challenges faced during breastfeeding evolving from garments.

H₀₂: *There is no significant difference between responses of Young Nursing Mothers (15-20 years) and Older Nursing Mothers (45 years and above) on the selection of breastfeeding garments with concealed openings and closures.*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	<i>Younger Mothers</i>	<i>Older Mothers</i>
Mean	3	3
Variance	1.757575758	1.737373737
Observations	100	100
Pooled Variance	1.747474747	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	198	
t Stat	0	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.5	
t Critical one-tail	1.652585784	
P(T<=t) two-tail	1	
t Critical two-tail	1.972017432	

t Stat = 0.00 < t Critical = 1.97, therefore, we accept the null hypothesis. This means that both Young Nursing Mothers (15-20 years) and Older Nursing Mothers (45 years above) have no special preference in the selection of breastfeeding garments.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that most Nursing Mothers in Makurdi Metropolis find it challenging breastfeeding their babies in public or completely avoid breastfeeding their babies in public gatherings like weddings, political meetings, workshops/seminars and places of worship, because they have to lift up their blouses and even gowns in the attempt to have access to their breast for breastfeeding. This action exposes their breast, back and tummy, which makes most

Nursing Mothers resort to using infant formula in feeding their babies too early before they even reach age six months, which makes babies vulnerable to childhood diseases and diseases due to unhygienic preparation of the infant formula.

The study also revealed that “tight fitted blouses” are not inconveniencing if there is appropriate concealment at the bust line for easy access to breast. Also the most preferred garment by both the young and older Nursing Mothers were blouses with zip at both sides of the bust line, followed by tight fitted blouse with Velcro at both bust line, and gowns with zip across the burst line. This is In line with Gough (2008) findings, Nursing Mothers need not fear of exposing their bust in the full glare of the public because the brassier section of the garments flexes shrinks and allows mothers the ease to bring out their breast and breastfeed their infants ones.

V. CONCLUSION

The research work revealed that with the provision of breastfeeding garments with concealed openings and closures, that would enable Nursing Mothers breastfeed discretely without exposure of breast, back or tummy; Nursing Mothers in Makurdi metropolis were willing to breastfeed their babies anytime, anywhere and delay the introduction of complementary food until after the WHO recommended six months of continuous breastfeeding.

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