

Breast Feeding Practices in Jalandhar

Sir,

In a survey to find out the breast feeding practices of our town, 100 mothers were interviewed in March 1987. These mothers came for routine physical examination or immunization or brought a sick child. Mothers who had Caesarian section were not included in this study.

All mothers included in the study had normal vaginal deliveries, 80% in private nursing homes, 13% were home deliveries and 7% were delivered in government hospitals. Infants were of the following age group at the time of mothers' interview 1 day to 1 month-38%, 1 month to 4 months - 52%, and 4 months to 6 months - 10%. Antenatal advice was given to only 13% mothers as part of their routine antenatal check up done by a doctor in every case.

Breast feeding was initiated within 1 hr of delivery in 2%, within 1- 24 hrs of delivery in 30% and after 24 hrs in 68% cases. Exclusive breast feeding was being given to 17% only at the time of interview. Bottle was used to feed the child in 90% cases sometimes or the other

in first few days of life. Bottle was used on the advice of doctors, dais, grandmothers or other relations. For 45%, it was their first meeting with the pediatrician, 55% were seen by pediatricians earlier but inspite of this fact only 17% were being fed exclusively on breast and most of them were using bottles to feed their infants.

All pediatricians should take active steps to promote breast feeding and eliminating bottle feeds. Breast feeding must be started immediately after birth. Delay causes lactation failures. Bottles should never be recommended by the doctor to feed the child, rather a cup may be used if the child is unable to suck. All doctors should consider endorsing the declaration on breast feeding brought out by Dr. G.P. Mathur, Medical College, Kanpur in the February 1988 issue of The Indian Journal of Pediatrics. By doing this, one will be committed to breast feeding.

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CORRIGENDUM

This refers to the article entitled "Encephalopathy associated with acute measles" authored by Dr. Rashmi Kumar, which appeared as an original article in the May-June, 1989 issue of the Indian Journal of Pediatrics. The title of the article was wrongly printed. The correct title is "ACUTE ENCEPHALOPATHY ASSOCIATED WITH MEASLES." The error is regretted.

EDITOR