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Prevalence of delayed umbilical cord clamping practices

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Background: Despite the current scientific evidence, delayed cord clamping increases early hemoglobin concentrations and iron stores in infants; the stubborn and persistent practice of early cord clamping is still a standard routine care.

Objectives: The study aimed to explore the umbilical cord clamping practices of maternity care providers in Oman.

Methods: A descriptive survey using questionnaire was used among a convenient sample of 210 maternity care providers. The attrition rate was more than 15% as expected in online survey. The results were analyzed using descriptive analysis in SPSS version 16.

Results: Maternity care providers' cord clamping practices revealed a varied practice and most (70-72.6%) of them were clamping umbilical cord within one minute of birth. Further exploration confirmed that majority (87.4-89.6%) of them defined early cord clamping timing as within one minute for both term and preterm newborns. This evidence explained that their practices are in par with their perception on definition of early cord clamping. The most listed benefits of delayed cord clamping by more than 50% of the maternity health care providers were physiologic transitioning of the newborn, increase in infant iron stores, and reduced risk of infant anemia, decreased need for infant transfusions. Polycythemia and jaundice were identified as the highest associated risks of delayed cord clamping. Majority of them are aware of the new guidelines for delayed cord clamping recommendations by different sources such as Oman Ministry of Health (17.2%), published research (15.4%), WHO (18.3%), RCOG (28.8%), NICE (21.1%). Only 11% of the participants rated hospital policy as references guide for the practice on decision regarding timing of cord clamping.

Conclusion: Though most maternity care providers are aware of new guideline regarding timing of cord clamping through various professional organizations, their practice is still sticking to early cord clamping.

Biography

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