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Prevalence and predictors of exclusive breastfeeding practices among infants in Hossana town, Southern Ethiopia: a community based cross-sectional study

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Introduction: Different researches provide convincing evidence for the effect of human milk in decreasing the risk of infant mortality and morbidity from acute and chronic diseases. The World Health Organization (WHO) advocates for breastfeeding as the best source of food for optimal infant growth and development. They recommend that infants should be exclusively breastfed, receiving no other foods or liquids besides breast milk, until six months of age.

Objective: To assess prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding practices and predictors among infants in Hossana Town, Southern Ethiopia, 2015

Method & Materials: A community based cross sectional study was conducted from January to February 2015, in Hossana town, Hadiya Zone, Southern Ethiopia. Multi stage sampling technique was used to select 720 respondents. All the questionnaires were entered, edited, coded and cleaned into Epi-info version 3.5.3 and exported to SPSS version 20 software packages for analysis. The degree of association between independent and dependent variables were assessed using odds ratio, 95% confidence interval and p-value <0.05 to be considered as significant.

Result: A total sample of 707 mothers having infants aged 0–12 months was interviewed which had the response rate of 98%. The prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding in the study area was 74%. Age group of the respondents 15-24 [AOR=3.2, 95% CI: 1.6, 6], illiterate educational level of the respondents' husband [AOR=0.34, 95% CI: 0.12, 0.95], age of the infants <six months [AOR=2.7, 95% CI: 1.3, 3.9], prelactal feeding [AOR=4, 95% CI: 2.6, 6.5], early initiated breast feeding (AOR=1.91, 95% CI=1.16, 3), plan to exclusive breastfeeding (AOR=2, 95% CI=1.4, 3), advice/ counseling on infant feeding (AOR=1.85, 95% CI=1.2, 2.8).

Conclusion: Promotion of exclusive breastfeeding for age group 34-49, encouragement of education for husbands, provision of EBF for all <six months, supporting early initiated breast feeding, and enabling every mother a prenatal exclusive breastfeeding plan during antenatal care were recommended in order to increase the proportion of women practicing EBF.

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