

ABSTRACT

Background: Neonatal jaundice is the yellow discoloration of the baby's eyes and the skin due to high bilirubin levels in blood. If not properly managed, can result in long term effects like deafness, blindness, brain damage and even death. Right treatment is by; photo therapy and exchange blood transfusion but postnatal mothers are usually reluctant to seek this care.

Objective: The study assessed the knowledge, attitude and practices of postnatal mothers in Nakasero Hospital towards management of neonatal jaundice so as to raise awareness on neonatal management to improve health seeking behavior among reluctant mothers.

Methods: A descriptive research design was used where a sample size of 66 respondents was selected by simple random sampling and data was collected through interviews.

Findings: Despite having heard of neonatal jaundice 60(91%), respondents had low knowledge towards management of neonatal jaundice because; 37(62%) were unaware of neonatal jaundice when their children developed it, and didn't know 40(67%) that medical care was the best as 25(63%) preferred displaying a baby in sunlight and 12(30%) use of herbs.

Respondents had negative attitude towards management of neonatal jaundice because; 54(60%) thought that immediately seeking of medical help to jaundiced babies was not necessary as they regarded it as wastage of money yet the condition could heal by itself. They 47(78%) also believed that medical management had effects such as; 28(60%) believed photo therapy could lead to blindness and 19(40%) blood transfusion could lead to infection.

This could have led to poor practices in the management of neonatal jaundice where; 31(51%) self

medicated their jaundiced babies by displaying them in sunlight, instilled herbs in the eyes and not feeding their babies on anything that bore yellow color. However, 42(78%) breastfed jaundiced babies which was a good practice. In conclusion: Postnatal mothers were unaware of proper management of neonatal jaundice as many were opposed to photo therapy and blood transfusion which were ideal treatment strategies in preference of displaying their babies in sunlight and smearing them with herbs which was wrong.

Recommendation: The researcher suggests that, more emphasis should be on education and sensitization of the general public about the proper management of neonatal jaundice in health care settings and having health facility based deliveries for proper assessment before discharge.