

Abstract

Introduction: The study on Knowledge, Attitude and Practices on exclusive breastfeeding among adolescent mothers was conducted in Metu sub-county, Moyo between the months of June and November, 2013. The specific objectives of the study were: to establish the level of knowledge on breastfeeding among adolescent mothers, to examine the attitudes of adolescent mothers towards breastfeeding and to identify breastfeeding practices among adolescent mothers.

Methods: A cross-sectional study using both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques was used. Semi-structured questionnaires were administered to 246 participants at 4(four) parishes and 52 villages. In depth interviews were conducted from each of these areas. Bi-variate analysis was done to determine the association between mother's level of education and intention to breastfeed for the recommended time. A two-by-two analysis was done to assess determine the association between mother's occupation and intention to breastfeed for the intended period

Results: The result showed that the knowledge attitude and practices on exclusive breastfeeding among adolescent mothers were greatly influenced by mother's level of education and occupation. This was arrived at by running the chi-square values (3.98 which is greater than chi-square at 5% which is 3.816 .And that same conclusion was got by running the p-value (which is 0.02 which is less than 0.05) Consequently ,using the OR values 0.54,we can conclude that ,mother who are having their level of education as primary or below are or were 0.54 times less likely to breast feed their babies for the recommended time and hence a recommendation can be written to enable the mother attain at least secondary education. At the two by two analysis, the χ^2 value 6.441 is greater that the χ^2 observed at 5% which is 3.864.Further more, this is consistent with the P-value $0.035 < 0.05$ which further proves a statistical association between occupation and the intensions to breastfeed for the recommended time .Looking at the odds ratio value of 1.669,it is evident that the group termed as **Domestic employed*(house wives and peasants)** were 1.669 times more likely to have intensions of breast feeding for recommended time as compared to the group termed as **Employed*(government/public servant or self-employed)**.

Conclusions and recommendations: Although breastfeeding was universal in this community, the knowledge, attitude and practice of EBF was low. There is a need to institute interventions aimed at early initiation of breastfeeding and improving the knowledge, attitude and practice of EBF in the study community. Consequently, mothers should be educated to breastfeed for the recommended standard time, which can be done in talk shows on radio, health talk, at antenatal care services, community outreaches, in papers, by health professionals and village health teams.