

Factors that affect exclusive breast-feeding among post-natal mothers:

a case of Kinondoni municipality in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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Statistical estimates from UNICEF show that about 11.6% of the deaths of 6.9 million children who are under-five in developing countries could be prevented through good breast-feeding practices, especially exclusive breast-feeding (EBF). Furthermore, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends mothers to breastfeed their children one hour after delivery and exclusive breast-feeding up to six months for a healthy growth and development of their babies. Despite its advantages breast-feeding is not practised very much in many countries; Tanzania not being an exception. This study was intended for assessing what mothers know and how they view exclusive breast-feeding practices, finding out complementary food given to children and issues regarding breast-feeding of infants. The study was descriptive and cross sectional, employing quantitative measures. Data was collected from 100 post-natal mothers at Sinza RCH clinic and analysed using SPSS version 19. Results show that most mothers (92 percent) were knowledgeable about the advantages of breast-feeding. However, many of them were not willing to practise it. Soft foods were mentioned to be given to babies during the initiation of complementary feeding. The study revealed that the factors that affect exclusive breast-feeding include: anxiety of breast-feeding in public; being busy with household chores when the baby is crying; sickness of the mother; and travelling of the mother away from home. Further research is needed on the nutritional contents of the food given to babies, to determine whether it fulfils their requirements. In addition to that, there is room for improvement of the institutional policies and cultural practices that impede breast-feeding through legislation.