

## **A-01 Knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning, breast feeding and post natal problems**

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**Objective:** To study basic knowledge, attitude and practices of mothers regarding family planning, breast feeding and common minor post natal complications and find out areas that can be improved by intervention such as health education and proper provision of facilities. 6 month study starting January, 1995, at ward 3 de Soysa Hospital for Women, Colombo.

195 mothers randomly selected out of 3320 deliveries were included in the study. These mothers were interviewed using a questionnaire.

80% of the women had a good knowledge about family planning methods but only 40% used modern or traditional methods before this pregnancy. 43% preferred natural methods as a family planning method. 85% of the mothers did not want to have another baby after their first baby before 3 years but 67% of those mothers conceived before 6 months for the second time. 71% got family planning advice from lay people. Reasons for not using family planning were religious in 59% of the mothers; fear about side effects in 4%; fear about subsequent subfertility in 3% and family planning failure among close relatives in 1%.

Regarding breast feeding, 100% mothers were motivated and were feeding the babies. But only 80% knew how to hold and feed the baby and about breast care and length of breast feeding. 90% of the mothers did not know whether to feed the baby if she conceives while breast feeding. Only 35% knew correct weaning of the baby. 40% were not aware about female cancers such as carcinoma of the breast and cervix. 80% were not aware about early detection of these cancers. 10% of the babies had poor sucking which was the commonest

complaint. 68% of the mothers had pain at episiotomy site, 22% of the mothers had abdominal pain due to uterine contractions, breast tenderness and backache.

This study reveals that knowledge and practice of family planning, breast feeding, weaning and other medical issues are far from ideal. All these mothers should be given proper scientific advice to improve their knowledge and practice. This can be done by leaflets, antenatal classes and other methods of scientific medical education.