Knowlege of breastfeeding and preventive behaviors in mothers of a health center of Lima Peru

Conocimiento de lactancia y conductas preventivas en madres de un centro de salud de Lima Perú

ABSTRACT. Objectives: To determine the relationship between maternal knowledge about breastfeeding and behaviors directed towards the prevention of diseases in children under 2 years. Materials and methods: Quantitative approach research, non-experimental cross-sectional design, correlational descriptive level. The study sample consisted of 140 mothers who attended their children in a Health Center of a district of Lima - Peru. For the data collection, the questionnaire was used as a tool and validated through the Cronbach's Alpha test with a reliability of 0.875 and 0.887. Results: Regarding knowledge of breastfeeding, 34.29% of mothers present a good level, 42.14% have a regular level and 23.57% have a bad level. It also shows that 27.14% of mothers have a good level of behavior with respect to the prevention of diseases in their children under 2 years, 42.86% have a regular level and 30.00% deficient level. Conclusions: It was concluded in the Health Center chosen for the study, mothers' knowledge about breastfeeding is directly and positively related to attitudes towards disease prevention.

Keywords: Breastfeeding, disease prevention, infant, child development, child health

RESUMEN. Objetivo: Determinar la relación entre el conocimiento materno sobre lactancia materna y conductas dirigidas hacia la prevención de enfermedades en los niños menores 2 años. Materiales y método: Investigación de enfoque cuantitativo, diseño no experimental de corte transversal, nivel descriptivo correlacional. La muestra de estudio estuvo conformada por 140 madres que atendían a sus niños en un Centro de Salud de un distrito de Lima - Perú. Para la recolección de datos se utilizó de la encuesta y como instrumento el cuestionario, validado a través de la prueba de Alfa de Cronbach con una confiabilidad de 0,875 y 0,887. Resultados: Respecto al conocimiento de lactancia materna, 34.29% de las madres presentan nivel bueno, 42.14% presentan nivel regular y 23.57% nivel malo. También se evidencia que el 27.14% de las madres presentan buen nivel de conducta con respecto a la prevención de enfermedades en sus niños menores de 2 años, 42.86% presentan nivel regular y 30.00% nivel deficiente. Conclusiones: Se concluyó en el Centro de Salud elegido para el estudio, el conocimiento de las madres sobre lactancia materna está relacionado directa y positivamente con las conductas hacia la prevención de enfermedades.

Palabras clave: Lactancia materna, prevención de enfermedades, lactante, desarrollo infantil, salud del niño
INTRODUCTION

Exclusive breastfeeding drastically reduces deaths from respiratory infections and digestive diseases. However, only 38% of newborns receive breastfeeding during the first 6 months. And in countries that have little access to health care, almost 40% of newborns die. On the contrary, if all children were breastfed correctly every year, the morbidity and mortality indicators would decrease considerably as long as good information is available plus family support.

In the last year, the PAHO showed that there are 70% of mothers who decide to breastfeed the newborn during the first 6 months of life. And although it is true that Peru has shown improvement figures regarding breastfeeding, it is still 60 % the optimal average compared to 49.1% of exclusive breastfeeding between the years 2012 and 2015.

Considering that breastfeeding is fundamental for the proper development of early childhood and that it requires more informed mothers on the subject, a review of primary sources was carried out to document the state of knowledge of mothers on the subject.

Several studies conducted in Colombia and Cuba showed that an average of 51.1% of mothers have no idea about breastfeeding techniques.

Similar situation refers to the studies carried out in Peru (Ica and Lima) where it was observed that only 25% had positive responses on breastfeeding and 76% were familiar with the word diarrhea.

Hence the question arises whether mothers who know less about breastfeeding at the same time have poor preventive behaviors of diseases in their young children.

When carrying out the theoretical review of the subject in question, it was found that both the governing bodies of health at national and international level agree that breastfeeding is a fundamental practice of child nutrition because it is rich in nutrients necessary for proper growth and development.

The benefits to the child are: protect from respiratory, gastric, intestinal and ear infections; help to those who do not suffer from allergies; helps in its bacterial flora; prevents childhood obesity; complete food; provides hydration; excellent neurological development; it favors the mother - child bond; favors the maturation of the central nervous system; immunological support; development of your motor-oral apparatus; presents higher intellectual coefficients; protects the teeth and there is less dental risk; among others.

Also, in addition to exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months; It is recommended to inform all mothers that colostrum is the first perfect food for the newborn and should be administered in the first hours of life, as it provides nutrients and contains antibodies that help protect against frequent diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhea. It is an affordable product that is easily achieved and is sufficient.

All this information should be promoted globally so that not only all mothers are educated, but also the modification of behaviors that protect the child from illnesses.

In this regard, the WHO refers that the prevention of diseases is a strategy of primary care, which considers the human being a biopsychosocial perspective and interrelates the promotion, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration. Preventive measures of diseases that mothers of young children should take into account are wash hands with plenty of soap, wash fruits and vegetables, eat cooked food, breast milk feed up to 6 months, have basic services, personal hygiene, health education, avoid contact with children sick, ventilate the house, wash toys and especially have vaccines like rotavirus that prevents gastrointestinal diseases, in addition to pneumococcus and influenza.

For the aforementioned, and considering that there is a greater percentage of death in poor places with little accessibility to the health establishment where the lack of information of mothers is notorious. Considering also that the nursing professional has an important direct and effective contribution to the care of children’s health, developing promotional preventive activities. The present study was designed to determine the relationship between knowledge about breastfeeding and disease prevention behaviors in mothers of children under 2 years of age served in a health center in the city of Lima, during the period of 2017.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was a quantitative approach, non-experimental cross-sectional design, correlational descriptive level. The population consisted of 220 mothers of children under 2 years of age who attended the growth and development service of a health center in the district of La Victoria in the city of Lima-Peru during the period of 2017. The sample consisted of 140 mothers according to the sample calculation formula and under simple random probabilistic sampling, fulfilling certain inclusion criteria.

The technique used for the data collection was the survey and the instruments two questionnaires with 27 questions in total, divided into 16 items for breastfeeding and 11 items for disease prevention. Both instruments were validated by expert judgment and subjected to a pilot test with reliability results of 0.875 and 0.887 according to cronbach’s alpha.
For the processing and analysis of data, SPSS software version 23.0 was used, converting the variables to levels according to performance ranges.

RESULTS

At the level of knowledge about breastfeeding, which mothers of children under two years old possess; predominantly 42.14% with a regular level followed by 23.57% with a bad level. When analyzing the dimensions of the variable, there is greater ignorance about exclusive breastfeeding (46.43% present regular level and 25.00% bad level) than about complementary feeding (39.29% regular level and 23.57% bad level).

When performing the hypothesis test, according to the Spearman correlation with moderate result of 0.688 and statistical significance of p = 0.001 less than 0.05; it is concluded that the variable knowledge about breastfeeding is directly and positively related to the variable behaviors of disease prevention; This means that as knowledge about breastfeeding increases, disease prevention behavior increases proportionally.

Regarding maternal behaviors to prevent diseases in children under two years of age; regular behaviors (42.86%) followed by deficient behaviors (30.00%) predominate. When analyzing the dimensions of the variable, it is evident that there is a greater lack of prevention of respiratory diseases in children under 2 years old (41.43% regular level and 28.57% deficient level) in comparison with the behaviors of prevention of digestive diseases (46.43% regular level and 22.86% deficient level).

Graph 1.
Percentage distribution of the level of knowledge about breastfeeding that mothers of children under two years old possess

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>REGULAR</th>
<th>BAD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34.29</td>
<td>42.14</td>
<td>23.57</td>
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</table>

Graph 2.
Percentage distribution of disease prevention behaviors presented by mothers of children under two years of age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>REGULAR</th>
<th>DEFICIENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27.14</td>
<td>42.86</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Table 1.
Spearman correlation test between maternal knowledge of breastfeeding and behaviors for the prevention of diseases in children under two years of age

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Breastfeeding</th>
<th>Prevention of diseases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.688**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (Bilateral)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).
DISCUSSION

The results of the study conducted in mothers of children under two years of age attended in a health center in the city of Lima, show that knowledge about breastfeeding is directly and positively related to the behaviors of prevention of diseases with a statistical significance of \( p = 0.001 \).

On the other hand, the data reveal that the study population shows a medium to low level of knowledge about breastfeeding accompanied by a medium to deficient level of disease prevention behavior in children under two years of age.

The result of mothers’ level of knowledge about breastfeeding coincides with that found by Mejía in a study with postpartum women in a public hospital in Lima, Peru where there was a regular level of knowledge regarding breastfeeding\(^{10}\) and differs from the level of knowledge found by Borre, where 85.6% of mothers have adequate knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding; however, 51.1% have no idea of breastfeeding techniques.\(^{18}\)

These data account for the misinformation regarding breastfeeding that mothers still have. Therefore, intervention programs are needed to educate mothers and future nursing mothers; especially primiparous and adolescents, on issues of exclusive breastfeeding.

Likewise; regarding the average level of preventive behaviors of diseases; this result is contrasted with the results shown by Reyes about the prevention of respiratory diseases, where there is a regular level of prevention of respiratory diseases by mothers; with the result that HAIs were the main cause of morbidity in children with a prevalence of 59.9%, the main type of IRA was acute rhino pharyngitis that reached 68.2% of cases, followed by pneumonia with 14.9%.

Especially primiparous and adolescents, on issues of exclusive breastfeeding.

It is concluded that greater and better interventions are needed that can improve knowledge about breastfeeding, and mothers can be motivated to carry out preventive measures of diseases in their children; being that this progressive development can be approached jointly.

Conflicts of interest: The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

REFERENCES BIBLIOGRÁFICAS


