

Impact of a Breast Feeding Educational Program for Mothers Having Pre-Term Infants in General Hospitals in Port Said

Abstract: The provision of breast milk is essential for preterm infants as it provides unique health benefits that are unmatched by other types of feeding. However, breastfeeding presents unique challenges for preterm infants that include establishing and maintaining the mothers' milk supply and transitioning the infant from gavage feeding to breastfeeding. *Objectives:* evaluate the impact of breastfeeding education program on mother's knowledge and on preterm infants' outcome. *Subjects and method:* A quasi-experimental study was carried out at the Neonatal Intensive Care Units at El-Naser, General Port Fouad hospitals and Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Centers at Port-Said city. The sample comprised 100 neonates and their mothers divided equally into study and control groups. The data were collected using a questionnaire sheet to assess mothers' knowledge related to breastfeeding, neonatal physical assessment (feeding patterns) sheet during hospitalization, and assessment of neonates during follow up period. *Results:* The implementation of a well-designed applied intervention program about breast feeding of preterm infant proved to be successful in improving infants' outcomes in terms of breastfeeding. *Conclusion:* The implementation of a well-designed applied intervention program proved to be successful in improving their knowledge. This was reflected in their practice leading to improved infants' outcomes in terms of breastfeeding. These improvements were retained throughout the four-month follow-up with less gastrointestinal and lower rate of re-hospitalization. Multivariate analysis confirmed the positive independent effect of the intervention on mother's knowledge score. Therefore, the study recommended the implementation of the program on a wider scale to confirm its merits and for further improvement.

Key words: breast feeding, pre-term infant