Perception of breastfeeding among female medical students, Taibah University, Medina, Saudi Arabia

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Background: Breast feeding (BF) is known to have many advantages but our Arab region has a pattern similar to western countries; where exclusive breastfeeding is less than 35%. Knowledge given to women during her antenatal visits plays an important influential role in her attitude and practice of BF later on.

Objective: To explore knowledge and attitude of female medical students at Taibah University about breastfeeding.

Methods: A cross sectional survey was carried out from October through November 2012. It included female medical students. Proportional sampling allocation technique was used with a total sample of 149 students. A specialty designed self-administered questionnaire in Arabic form was used. It included socio-demographic data, obstetric history, data about the knowledge and attitude of female medical students towards breastfeeding value and guidelines. Mean percent knowledge score for value of BF, mean percent score for BF guidelines and mean percent score for attitude were calculated. Appropriate statistical tests for qualitative and quantitative data were used accordingly.

Study Population: Female students, Medical College, Female Department, Taibah University, Almadinah Almonawarah, KSA.

Results: Majority (91.9%) was never married and 37.6% got their knowledge about BF via books. Regarding ever married women, 58.3% only were gravid (mean =2.2±1.94). Only 25.0% were family planning users; 66.7% of them used hormonal contraceptives. Only 20% breast fed their infants with a mean duration for exclusive BF of 3.8±2.87 months and mean age of weaning of 2.3±0.63 months. The mean knowledge percent score for guidelines of BF was 64.7±8.45. The mean attitude percent score for concepts related to BF was 76.9±7.91.

Conclusion: Media and internet have minor roles in getting knowledge about BF. The mean knowledge score about advantages of BF, guidelines of BF and attitude towards BF of all female medical students; especially academic years were unsatisfactory.

Biography
Ghaida Mohammed Aziz is a Medical student from Taibah University in Al Madinah, Saudi Arabia. she enrolled continuously without interruption throughout her study years in the medical school. She was awarded previously with Madinah’s Academic Excellence Awards in 2003 and 2007 during her early school days. In medical school, she participated in many events such as Breast Cancer Awareness Day, World Hemophilia Day and World Kidney Day which were held in Al Madinah. She experienced teaching via Taibah medical club where she taught first aid for participants and clinical skills for younger medical students. She is also volunteering in Saudi Red Crescent Authority to provide first aid for pilgrims in Al Masjed Al Nabawi during the month of Ramadan. Recently, she was chosen as one of the outstanding students to have an elective program in Manchester’s Hospitals via Manchester University based on an agreement between Taibah University and Manchester University.

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