

**ENABLING AND CHALLENGING FACTORS OF
EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING AMONG
MOTHERS VISITING IMMUNIZATION CLINIC
IN MEIKHTILA GENERAL HOSPITAL**

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ABSTRACT

Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) is the practice of feeding an infant exclusively with breast milk for the initial six months of life, without any other liquids or solids. Lack of proper EBF can lead to higher risk of neonatal and under-five mortality especially in low- and middle-income countries. The EBF rates significantly diverge between countries due to differences in several factors including social and cultural context, healthcare system and support of the society and working environment. In Myanmar, understanding factors influencing EBF is vital for health sector to provide better interventions to improve EBF practices. Thus, the objective of this study was to assess the enabling and challenging factors of EBF among mothers visiting immunization clinic in Meikhtila General Hospital (MGH). The cross-sectional study was carried out among 200 mothers of 6-18 months' children visiting Immunization clinic in MGH. Face to face interview was done using structured questionnaire. Binary logistic regression was done to determine factors influencing EBF. The results pointed out that overall the prevalence of EBF was 80.5% in this study. Regarding attitude, 85% of mothers had positive attitude about EBF. About 90% received supports from families and communities as an enabling factor. Meanwhile, 27.3% did not know right duration of EBF, being a challenging factor. As for influencing factors, the EBF was negatively associated with working mothers (AOR=0.24, 95%CI=0.07,0.81, p value=0.021) but positively associated with attitude level (AOR=13.79, 95%CI=1.58,120.05, p value=0.017) and birth order; (AOR=5.97, 95%CI=1.36,26.10, p value=0.018) for between 2nd and 4th interval and (AOR=0.03, 95%CI=0.00 ,0.074, p value=0.032) for equal or more than 5th respectively. The results from this study could provide valuable information that the relevant policies, interventions and efforts should be directed towards promoting awareness, education, and support systems for promoting EBF not only in the communities, but at working places as well. And also, Awareness raising programs on the crucial role of EBF should be implemented during pregnancy and post-natal period in order to ensure safety motherhood and childhood lives.