

ROLE OF SINGLE ANTENATAL BREAST EXAMINATION AND ADVICE IN ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCCESSFUL LACTATION

SHEILA DALAL • NOZER SHERAR • R.K. BHATHENA • V.R. WALVEKAR

SUMMARY

This project was undertaken to evaluate the effect of a single antenatal breast examination and advice by an obstetric resident on Lactational performance in the mother. The incidence of breast & nipple abnormalities were also noted. The study group consisted of 100 primigravidae patients out of which 64 were followed up after a full term vaginal delivery. Control group comprised of 100 primigravidae after normal delivery without any antenatal breast examination.

In the control group the incidence of postnatal breast problems and nipple abnormalities were 24% & 14% respectively. In the study group the incidence was 6.2% & 3.2% respectively. Nipple abnormalities in the study group decreased from 9% in the antenatal period to 3.2% in the postnatal period.

The need for manual expression and nipple shield was required in 29% of control & only in 14.1% of the study group. Lactation was established on 1st Day in 64% of study group and 29% of the control group.

Thus single antenatal breast examination and advice definitely reduced the abnormal nipple and breast finding and ensured early onset of successful Lactation.

INTRODUCTION :

'Breast is the best' compared to all the sources of nutrition for the neonate. The advantages are ready availability without preparation with assurance for natural nourishment and freedom from contaminant and protection against infection. It also has contraceptive value & especially in a developing country like India its value is

beyond comparison.

The topic was selected for our study because of its vital importance. Establishment of successful lactation is hardly an instinctive act, hence it requires physical & mental preparation of mother right from the antenatal period including antenatal examination, education, motivation and advice which should be simple, acceptable & based on experience and insight. The obstetrician carries an added responsibility in talking this aspect of antenatal breast examination and advice apart

Dept. of Obst. & Gyn. Nowrosjee Wadia Maternity Hospital & Seth G.S. Medical College, Bombay.
Accepted for Publication on 27/11/91.

from the routine antenatal care.

METHODOLOGY :

The project was undertaken at Nowrosjee Wadia Maternity Hospital over a period of 6 months in 1989.

Two groups were selected for evaluation :

1. Study Group : It consisted of 100 primigravidas examined antenatally. Of these 64 patients with full term normal vaginal delivery were followed up in the postnatal period.
2. Control Group : 100 primigravidas with normal vaginal delivery examined postnatally. None of them had an antenatal breast examination or advice regarding breast care.

PROTOCOL :

The patients in study group underwent a routine breast examination by obstetric resident in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy during antenatal check up.

Advice regarding breast care and basic knowledge about the mechanism of lactation was given by addressing small groups of patients. The benefits of breast feeding were stressed in the

discussions. Both groups had a postnatal breast examination done. Abnormal breast and nipple findings, time interval taken for successful lactation and the need for manual expression and nipple shield was noted.

Chi. square test was used for stastical significance.

RESULTS & ANALYSIS :

- i) Age distribution in the both groups was comparable :
- ii) A statistically significant decline in abnormalities of nipple in the study group was observed.

The incidence of postnatal breast problems were significantly lower in the study group than in the control group.

TABLE - I

Age Distribution

Years	Controls	Study
Less than 19	10	8
20 - 29	71	75
More than 30	19	17

TABLE - II

Abnormal findings of breast and/or nipples

	Controls		Study			
	No.	%	ANC		PNC	
			No.	%	No.	%
A) Breasts						
Swollen axillary tail	2	(2)	-	-	1	(1.6)
Engorgement	20	(20)	-	-	3	(4.6)
Breast lump	(1)	-	-	-	-	-
B) Nipple						
Flat nipple	9	(9)	5	(5)	1	(1.6)
- Unilateral	2	(2)	1	(1)	-	-
- Bilateral	7	(7)	4	(4)	1	(1.6)
Retracted nipples	5	(5)	4	(4)	1	(1.6)
- Unilateral	3	(3)	1	(1)	-	-
- Bilateral	2	(2)	3	(3)	-	(1.6)

P less than 0.05 : Significant

iii) The need for manual expression and nipple shield were required in fewer cases in the study group 14.1% compared to 29% in control group.

TABLE - III

Aids to Lactation

	Control		Study	
Manual expression	25	25%	8	12.5%
Nipple shield	4	4%	1	1.6%
	29	29%	9	14.1%

P less than 0.01 : Significant

iv) Mean days of onset of lactation were 2.16 in control group and 1.5 in study group; 84.4% of the study group had started lactating successfully on 2nd day compared to only 69% in controls.

TABLE - IV

Onset of Established Lactation

Day	Control	Study
1	29 (29%)	41 (64.1%)
2	40 (40%)	13 (20.3%)
3	17 (17%)	10 (15.6%)
4 or more	14 (14%)	--
Mean days of onset	2.16 days	1.5 days

Fourteen percent of controls started lactating only after 4th day whereas none in the study

group required these many days for establishment of lactation.

DISCUSSION :

Role of successful lactation performance of a mother in upbringing of the newborn need not be stressed. The establishment of lactation may be delayed or hampered due to inadequate physical and mental preparation of mother. Lack of awareness about the facts of lactation, anxiety and apprehension in the immediate postnatal period and false beliefs may also contribute to problems in successful lactation.

We undertook the project to evaluate the effect of single antenatal breast examination (by a resident) (in 3rd trimester of pregnancy) on establishment of successful lactation. Nipple and breast abnormalities if any, were noted antenatally and postnatally. Simple and lucid advice about nipple/breast care was given in the same visit.

A significant decline in the incidence of breast and nipple abnormalities were observed in the study group. Nipple abnormalities like retracted nipple could easily get corrected with proper advice. The incidence of breast engorgment was observed to be reduced due to simple advice about breast feeding as well as breast and nipple care.

Many of the women come to the antenatal clinics for registration when already in third trimester. Breast examination and advice at this stage also can help in establishment of successful lactation and may reduce the need for aids to lactation as evident from the study.

The usefulness of such a study lies not only in its importance but also its simplicity. A person with minimal training and experience can also carry the responsibility. Thus, if applied successfully at primary health levels, its benefits would reach millions of pregnant women in India.

CONCLUSION :

Single antenatal breast examination in late pregnancy and advice about breast/nipple care, together can result in significant reduction in

postnatal breast problems and nipple abnormalities. This may also help in the early onset of successful lactation and decrease in need for aids to lactation. Needless to say, it ensures a safe motherhood in feeding the newborn.

It is therefore recommended that at least one breast examination by obstetrician or trained

personnel be undertaken in every antenatal clinic for achieving successful breast feeding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT :

We thank the Dean of Nowrosjee Wadia Maternity Hospital for allowing us to undertake the project in this hospital and to publish the data.

Aids to Lactation

	Control	Study
Manual expression	22 (55%)	8 (17.5%)
Nipple shields	4 (10%)	1 (2.5%)
	29 (70%)	9 (20%)

P less than 0.01: Significant

(v) Mean days of onset of lactation were 2.18 in control group and 1.2 in study group. 84.4% of the study group had started lactating successfully on 2nd day compared to only 68% in control.

TABLE - IV

Onset of Established Lactation

Day	Control	Study
1	20 (50%)	41 (91.1%)
2	40 (90%)	13 (29.2%)
3	17 (39%)	10 (22.2%)
4 or more	14 (32%)	--
Mean days of onset	2.18 days	1.2 days

Percentage of control started feeding only after 4th day whereas most in the study

depended on manual expression to help in successful lactation. In the control group, 55% of the women started manual expression on the 2nd day of lactation, whereas in the study group, 91.1% of the women started manual expression on the 1st day of lactation. This difference was highly significant (P < 0.01). The mean days of onset of lactation were 2.18 in the control group and 1.2 in the study group. This difference was also highly significant (P < 0.01). The percentage of women who started lactating successfully on the 2nd day was 84.4% in the study group compared to 68% in the control group. This difference was also highly significant (P < 0.01). The percentage of women who started lactating successfully on the 1st day was 91.1% in the study group compared to 50% in the control group. This difference was also highly significant (P < 0.01). The percentage of women who started lactating successfully on the 2nd or 3rd day was 29.2% in the study group compared to 39% in the control group. This difference was not significant (P > 0.05). The percentage of women who started lactating successfully on the 4th day or later was 0% in the study group compared to 32% in the control group. This difference was highly significant (P < 0.01). The mean days of onset of lactation were 2.18 in the control group and 1.2 in the study group. This difference was highly significant (P < 0.01). The percentage of women who started lactating successfully on the 2nd day was 84.4% in the study group compared to 68% in the control group. This difference was also highly significant (P < 0.01). The percentage of women who started lactating successfully on the 1st day was 91.1% in the study group compared to 50% in the control group. This difference was also highly significant (P < 0.01). The percentage of women who started lactating successfully on the 2nd or 3rd day was 29.2% in the study group compared to 39% in the control group. This difference was not significant (P > 0.05). The percentage of women who started lactating successfully on the 4th day or later was 0% in the study group compared to 32% in the control group. This difference was highly significant (P < 0.01).