

## **Breast-feeding knowledge, attitude, behaviour and influencing factors among female staff of banks in the Jaffna Municipal area**

Mathangi N<sup>1</sup>, Sarangan S<sup>1</sup>, Sivashankar T<sup>2</sup>, Kandeepan K<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

<sup>2</sup> *Department of Community and Family Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

<sup>3</sup> *Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

**Background:** The rate of exclusive breast-feeding is lower in Jaffna compared with the national rate (82%), partly due to lack of knowledge among the mothers. Attitudes towards breast-feeding also influence breast-feeding behaviour. This study aimed to assess breast-feeding knowledge, attitude, behaviour and influencing factors among female staff of banks in the Jaffna Municipal Area.

**Methods:** This was a descriptive cross sectional study. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Details relevant to socio-demographic and banking factors and breast-feeding knowledge, attitude and behaviour were collected and analyzed using SPSS.

**Results:** A total of 197 bank staff participated in the study. The majority had moderate breast-feeding knowledge (50.8%), neutral attitudes (68%) and good behaviour (59.9%). By contrast, 19.8%, 18.8% and 40.1% had poor breast-feeding knowledge, attitude and behavior, respectively. Breast-feeding knowledge was significantly associated with age ( $p \leq 0.003$ ), salary ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) and family support ( $p \leq 0.002$ ). Although income was not significantly associated with breast-feeding attitude and behavior, there was a significant association between family support and behavior ( $p < 0.001$ ). Notably, only 79.7% gave or planned to give colostrum, 22.3% did not follow exclusive breast-feeding for 6 months, and 29.4% and 30.5% had avoided breast-feeding due to institutional and household work, respectively.

**Conclusion:** Female bank staff seem to have average knowledge, neutral attitudes, and good behavior related to breast-feeding. While family support is a major determinant of good breast-feeding behaviour, a substantial proportion of female bank staff neglect breast-feeding owing to their busy work schedules, suggesting this could be an area for health promotion efforts.

**Key words:** Knowledge, attitude, behaviour, breast-feeding, Jaffna