

Drivers and Barriers to the Acceptability of a Human Milk Bank Among Malaysians: A Cross Sectional Study

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Abstract : WHO recommends all babies to be exclusively breastfed and donor milk is the next best alternative in the absence of mother's own milk. The establishment of a human milk bank (HMB) is still being debated due to religious concerns in Malaysia leading to informal milk sharing practices, but little is known on the knowledge, attitude and perception of women towards HMB and its benefits. This study hypothesizes that there is no association between knowledge and attitude and the acceptance towards the establishment of human milk bank among Malaysian women and healthcare providers. The aim of this study is to determine the drivers and barriers among Malaysian towards the acceptance of an HMB. A cross-sectional study with 367 participants was enrolled within a period of 3 months to answer an online self-administered questionnaire. Data on sociodemographic, knowledge on breastfeeding benefits, knowledge and attitude on HMB and its specific issues were analyzed in terms of frequency and then proceed to multiple logistic regression. Majority of the respondents are of Islam religion (73.3%), have successfully completed their tertiary education (82.8%), and are employed (70.8%). Only 55.9% of respondents have heard of an HMB stating internet as their main source of information but a higher prevalence is agreeable to the establishment of a human milk bank (67.8%). Most respondents have a good score on knowledge of breastfeeding benefits and on HMB specific issues (70% and 54.2% respectively) while 63.8% of them have a positive attitude towards HMB. In the multivariate analysis, mothers with a good score on general knowledge of breastfeeding (AOR: 1.715) were more likely to accept the establishment of an HMB while Islamic religion was negatively associated with its establishment (AOR:0.113). This study has found a high prevalence rate of mothers who are willing to accept the establishment of an HMB. This action can be potentially shaped by educating mothers on the benefits of breastfeeding as well as addressing their religious concerns so the establishment of a religiously abiding HMB in Malaysia may be accepted without compromising their belief or the health benefit of donor milk.

Keywords : acceptability, attitude, human milk bank, knowledge

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