

Fathers' Knowledge and Attitude towards Breastfeeding: A Cross Sectional Study

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Abstract : Objective: To determine the breastfeeding knowledge and attitudes of fathers seen at the University of Santo Tomas Hospital. Design: Cross-sectional design. Setting: University of Santo Tomas Hospital (USTH). Participants: 156 fathers who were accompanying their wives/children at the USTH. Findings: Outcome of the Iowa Infant Feeding Attitude Scale showed fathers to be generally unbiased whether their child be fed breast milk or milk formula. About 85% agreed that breast milk is the ideal food for babies, 79% believed that breastfed babies are healthier than formula fed and 55% of them do not believe that breast milk lacks iron. About 80% agreed that it is easily digested, 87% are aware of the economical value and 57% agreed of its convenience. Breastfeeding support was noted when 55% of the fathers would encourage mothers to breastfeed so as not to miss the joys of motherhood, 91% believed that breastfeeding increased mother-infant bonding. About 57% do not feel left out whenever the mothers breastfeed. However, 46.6% support the decision of their wives to switch to formula feeding once they go back to work, 42% only find breastfeeding in public to be acceptable and 57% will not allow breast feeding to mothers who drink alcohol. Conclusion: In the study, although fathers' attitude toward breastfeeding is unbiased towards breastfeeding or formula feeding, the majority of the fathers appreciate breastfeeding and its benefits. Also, how the father's level of education, age, profession, household income and number of children had an effect on their attitude towards breastfeeding.

Keywords : father, breastfeeding, breast milk, knowledge

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