

## Abstract

Background Breastfeeding is an important public health strategy for improving infant and child morbidity and mortality, The WHO recommends that for the first six months of life, infants should be exclusively breastfed. This study aimed at assessing exclusive breastfeeding EBF knowledge, and practice among lactating mothers attending Benisaleh Family Health Unit having infant aged from 2-6 months. Methods: A cross-sectional study using structured questionnaire was conducted among mothers having infant aged from 2-6 months attending Bensaleh FHU for immunization practices through period from July to September 2013. Results: Out of 400 mothers interviewed; exclusive breast feeding was reported among 50 (12.5 %). The mean total knowledge score of participants was  $10.22 \pm 2.9$  & ranged from 4 to 22 out of 27 knowledge questions. The mean knowledge score was significantly higher in mothers, with higher education, working mothers and those who received knowledge from media & combined source than those with lower education, not working and who received knowledge from PHC workers. The significant predictors for exclusive breastfeeding practice among participants were; male sex, early breastfeeding initiation after delivery, and good knowledge with odds ratios of 3.02, 13.2 and 7.9 respectively. Conclusion and Recommendation: There was a lack of knowledge and correct feeding practice regarding EBF. Educated mothers have good knowledge. Counseling for mothers on EBF needs to be improved and health care workers need to be better trained to provide counseling services during antenatal care visits.

**Key Words** EBF, knowledge, practices, lactating mothers, breast milk