

# Breastfeeding Fatigue and Factors Influencing Breastfeeding Fatigue among Primipara Mothers

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The postpartum period can be a challenging time for new mothers experiencing profound physical and emotional changes after giving birth. Recovering from the effect of delivery, taking care of a new baby as well as herself requires a lot of energy. The critical days for breastfeeding success are the first weeks of delivery. Fatigue is one of the main problem faced by mothers in these days. The present study aimed at identifying breastfeeding fatigue and factors influencing breastfeeding fatigue among primipara mothers in selected hospitals at Calicut.

The objectives of the study were,

- Identify the breastfeeding fatigue among primipara mothers.
- Determine the factors influencing breastfeeding fatigue among primipara mothers.
- Find out the association between breastfeeding fatigue and selected sociodemographic variables.

**Methods:** Non experimental descriptive survey was conducted among 150 primipara mothers in Aster MIMS hospital, Calicut and IQRAA hospital, Calicut. The tools used were a structured questionnaire to assess the Socio-demographic data and personal data, a rating scale to identify breastfeeding fatigue and factors influencing it. The content validity was ensured with the help of experts. Study was conducted among 150 primipara mothers in Aster MIMS hospital, Calicut and IQRAA hospital, Calicut. Data were tabulated and analyzed.

**Results:** The findings revealed that majority of the samples had moderate breastfeeding fatigue and the breastfeeding fatigue was associated with physical factors such as pain and sleep pattern. The study also revealed that there was no association between breastfeeding fatigue and socio-demographic variable.

**Key Words:** Breastfeeding, fatigue, Primipara mothers.

## INTRODUCTION

Studies reported that, Childbirth and the responsibilities of parenting after birth require a great deal of energy. Fatigue in postpartum women is a concern for maternal-child nurses because of the impact on the health and parenting ability of the mother. Throughout postpartum mothers found to be mildly fatigued with situational and psychological fatigue. <sup>[1]</sup> Breastfeeding is often associated in women's minds as contributing to the feeling of overall perceived fatigue, and many women

indicate that they have ceased breastfeeding because of fatigue. <sup>[2]</sup>

There are many physical, psychological, and performance factors contributing to fatigue during breastfeeding. <sup>[3]</sup> It has been shown that there is a need for effective analgesia for perineal pain to reduce potential effects on maternal-infant interaction. The insidious effects of pain-such as fatigue, irritability, emotional instability, and social withdrawal could put extra stress on the woman and the dynamics of the postnatal family. <sup>[4]</sup>

Study conducted to identify the relationship between sleep characteristics and fatigue in healthy postpartum women showed that fatigue had a positive correlation with sleep disturbance, indicating that higher levels of fatigue are associated with disturbed sleep. [5]

New mothers often complain about back pain, shoulder pain, pain over nipples etc. Positioning is one of the major factors that contribute to successful breastfeeding. Fatigue can be reduced when multiple influencing factors are controlled. So it is imperative to identify the breastfeeding fatigue among primipara mothers and factors influencing it.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Non experimental survey design was conducted among 150 primipara mothers admitted in Aster MIMS hospital and Iqraa International hospital and research centre. Calicut. Ethical clearance was obtained from ethical board of Aster MIMS hospital and administrative board of Iqraa International hospital and research Centre. The study was conducted for a period of 45 days. Convenient sampling was used to select the samples. Tools used for the study were

1. Tool 1-Structured questionnaire to collect socio-demographic data.
2. Tool 2 -Rating scale to identify breastfeeding fatigue. It is based on modified fatigue symptom checklist. The tool was provided to primi parous mothers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> postnatal day.
3. Tool 3-Tool to identify the factors influencing breastfeeding fatigue among primipara mothers. It consists of 3 sections. Section A is to identify physical factors such as sleep and pain, section B is to identify the psychological factor such as stress and section C is to identify the performance factor such as positioning of the mother during breastfeeding.

Technique use for the study is self-report and observation. In order to establish the content validity of the tool it was

submitted to 8 experts including 5 nursing personnel and 2 gynecologists. The reliability of the tool was tested using Cronbach's alpha and obtained a value of 0.712 and 0.716 for the tool 2 and tool 3 respectively and found reliable. Content validity index were 0.92 and 0.9 for tool 2 and 3 respectively. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

## RESULTS

- Most of the samples (36%) belonged to the age group 21-25 years.
- Among 150 samples 47.3% were graduate.
- 50% of the samples were house wife
- Of 150 samples 74.7% had monthly income above RS 15000
- Majority (62%) of the sample were Muslim religion.
- Most of the samples were from nuclear families.
- 56% of the total samples were from rural area.
- Majority of the sample got married at the age between 18-25 years.
- 99.3% of the samples had not attended any classes related to breastfeeding.

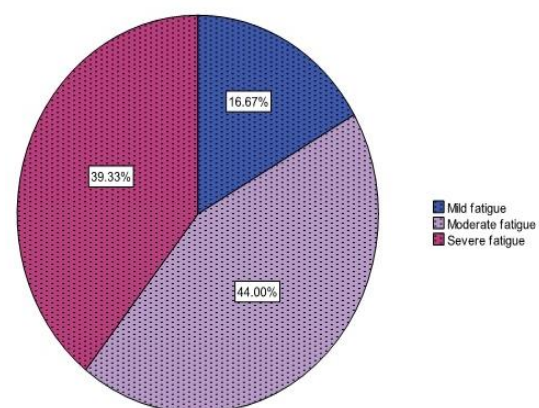


Figure 1: Distribution of samples based on level of breastfeeding fatigue

The figure 1 depicts that 44% of the samples had moderate breastfeeding fatigue, 39.33% of the samples had severe breastfeeding fatigue and 16.67% of the samples had mild breastfeeding fatigue.

**Table1: Distribution of sample based on physical factors. (n=150)**

Physical factors	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Sleep		
Adequate	47	31.3
Inadequate	84	68
Episiotomy Pain		
Mild	26	17.3
Moderate	71	47.3
Severe	53	35.3

It is inferred from the table 1 that most of the sample (68.7%) had inadequate sleep and 47.3% of the sample had moderate pain.

**Table2: Distribution of sample based on performance factor. (n=150)**

Performance factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positioning		
Appropriate	45	30
Inappropriate	105	70

Table 2 shows that most of the samples (70%) had used inappropriate positioning during breastfeeding.

**Table3: Association between breastfeeding fatigue and selected factors. (n=150)**

Factors	$\chi^2$	df	p value
Physical factors			
Sleep	6.59	2	0.037*
Pain	9.527	4	0.049*
Psychological factor			
Stress	5.529	4	0.23
Performance factor			
Positioning	1.763	2	0.41

(\*Significant at 0.05 level)

Table 3 shows that breastfeeding fatigue has a significant association with physical factor. Therefore, the null hypothesis  $H_{01}$  is rejected and research hypothesis  $H_1$  is accepted. There will be a significant association between breastfeeding fatigue and selected factors.

**Table4: Association between breastfeeding fatigue and socio-demographic variables. (n=150)**

Demographic variables	$\chi^2$	df	p value
Age	14.225	8	0.07
Occupation	6.90	6	0.33
Income	4.514	6	0.60
Religion	0.557	4	0.96
Type of family	7.166	4	0.12
Area of residence	1.001	2	0.60
Age at marriage	2.715	4	0.60
Class attended related to breastfeeding	5.037	2	0.08

Table 4 shows that there is no association between breastfeeding fatigue and selected Socio-demographic variables. Therefore research hypothesis  $H_2$  is rejected and null hypothesis  $H_{02}$  is accepted. There is no association between breastfeeding fatigue and selected Socio-demographic variables.

## DISCUSSION

In the present study, it is identified that, 39.33% of the samples had severe fatigue and 44% of the samples had moderate fatigue during breastfeeding. This result is consistent with finding of a study conducted by Hanrahan C.S and Deblois. D (1995) to determine the impact of postpartum early discharge on maternal fatigue and functional ability, which found that postpartum mothers reported severe fatigue. [6]

The present study reveals that there is a significant association between fatigue during breastfeeding and physical factor such as sleep and pain.

This result is comparable with the findings of a study conducted by Song J.E, Chang S.B, Son Y to identify the influencing factors of fatigue during postpartum. The result of study revealed that there is a significant correlation of fatigue during postpartum with sleep problem, infant care stress and perceived health problem. [7]

## CONCLUSION

Fatigue during postpartum is inevitable. But it can be reduced to some extent by controlling many factors like stress, sleep disturbances, positioning of infants while feeding. The study revealed that 39.33% the samples had severe fatigue and 44% of samples had moderate fatigue during breastfeeding. The study also found that breastfeeding fatigue is associated with physical factor such as sleep and pain.

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