



Received: 12<sup>th</sup> Feb-2013

Revised: 20<sup>th</sup> Feb-2013

Accepted: 20<sup>th</sup> Feb-2013

Research article

## KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LACTATIONAL AMENORRHEA AS A NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING METHOD AMONG NURSING STUDENTS

Rekhaudgiri, Vijaysorgavi and Arun

BLDEUs Shri.BM.Patil medical college Bijapur.

E mail – [drrekhabiradar@rediffmail.com](mailto:drrekhabiradar@rediffmail.com) Phone no -09448217015

**ABSTRACT:** Breast milk is amrit for babies and is vital for child survival, maternal health and child spacing. [1] Breast milk and breastfeeding provide physiological and psychological benefits birth for baby as well as the lactating mother. The breastfeeding mechanism also stimulates the release of certain hormones in the breastfeeding woman that render her amenorrhoeic and protect her from another pregnancy. Field and laboratory investigation have confirmed the traditional belief that lactation prolongs postpartum amenorrhea and provides some degree of protection against pregnancy [2] It has been estimated that 50% of pregnancies are unwanted or unplanned. The lactational amenorrhea method (LAM) is a highly efficient tool for the women to utilize. The efficacy and effectiveness of LAM is affected by its correct usage. The present study was undertaken to assess the knowledge on LAM among nursing students.

**OBJECTIVES:** To assess the knowledge about lactation amenorrhea among nursing students, To compare the pre and post test results after giving health education.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS :** **Study design** – Cross-sectional, **Study period**- one month, **Sample size**- 61 students (3<sup>rd</sup> year=39 and 4<sup>th</sup> year=22), **Study area**- B.sc Nursing students of BLDEU shri.B.M.Patil Medical College, Bijapur. Karanataka. These students are more likely to have contact with people soon. After obtaining permission from the concerned authority the predesigned semi structured questionnaires were distributed to the students. The information was collected in the pretest, after giving health education regarding LAM post test was conducted. Knowledge about LAM was assessed by applying statistical test. **Statistical test**- Percentage, McNemar's test.

**Key words** – Knowledge, Lactational amenorrhoea, Natural family planning method.

### INTRODUCTION

Lactation is the age old method of contraception. In the developing countries mostly birth control is still being monitored by natural lactation, and the contraception effect provided by breastfeeding is greater than that provided by all other reversible family planning methods. The Bellagiconensus conference on breast feeding as a family planning method determined that a mother who is breast feeding and remain amenorrhoeic has a 98% rate of protection from pregnancy for 6 month postpartum [2].

The efficiency and effectiveness of LAM is affected by its correct usage and the three criteria which must be fulfilled.<sup>23</sup>The present study was under taken to assess the knowledge about LAM among nursing students.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the knowledge and attitude on LAM among the nursing students.
2. To compare the pre and post test results.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

This cross-sectional study was conducted among 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year B.sc Nursing students of B.L.D.E.As Shri.B.M.Patil Medical college,Bijapur.Karnataka.As the topic has already been covered in their academics course and they are more likely to have contact with the people. After obtaining permission from the concerned authority the semi- structured questionnaire were distributed to the students and collected after they finished. After one hour lecture on the same topic post test was conducted. To compare pre and post test results statistical test was applied to know the knowledge gained after the health education. A total of 61 students were involved in the study.

## RESULTS

In the present study mean age group of participants was 20.22 +\_0.905. majority of them were males (67%). To assess the knowledge regarding LAM, the participant were asked about what do you understand by LAM and criteria for effective practice of LAM. It is dishearten to know that only 32% of them had given correct responses and 69% of them had given correct answer about the three criteria of effective practices like she is amenorrhoeic, is she fully or nearly fully breast feeding and her baby is <6 month.[2, 4]. There is a highly significant difference was found between pre and post test, in the post test 70% of them understand what is LAM and 98% of them have told all the three criteria's.(Table-1). Different answers were given the about effectiveness of LAM in the form of percentage in the pre test. In the post test 93.4% of them gave correct answer i.e 80-90%.<sup>1-4</sup>Significant difference was found between pre and post test.(Table-2)

**Table-1: Knowledge regarding three criteria's about LAM**

Criteria's	Pre test		Post test		McNemar's test
	No	%	No	%	
One criteria known	4	6.5	1	2	(R)
Two criteria known	4	6.5	-	-	X <sup>2</sup> =0.8 P>0.05, Non Significant
Three criteria known	42	69	<b>60</b>	<b>98</b>	X <sup>2</sup> =32.2 P=0.001, Highly Significant
Don't know	11	18	-	-	X <sup>2</sup> =6.75 P=0.01, Highly Significant
Total	61	100	61	100	

**Table-2: Knowledge regarding effectiveness of LAM**

LAM effectiveness	Pre test		Post test		McNemar's Test
	No	%	No	%	
50-60 %	18	30	-		X <sup>2</sup> = 99.25 P=0.001, Highly Significant
70-80 %	27	44	02	3.3	X <sup>2</sup> =18.01 P=0.0001, Highly Significant
80-90%	10	16	57	93.4	(R)
Don't know	06	10	02	3.3	X <sup>2</sup> =39.68 P=0.001, Highly Significant
Total	61	100	61	100	

### Other questions related to LAM like

- Breastfeeding and LAM are the same
- Manually expressing milk for the infant when women is unable to breastfeed is affective as suckling to suppress the ovulation,

- Malnourished mother cannot breastfeed
- LAM always need a backup method for its effective use
- Does use of LAM effect the health of mother and infants
- Does LAM provide protection against HIV/AIDS or STI.

**Table – 3: Knowledge regarding other questions related to LAM in the form of true/false**

Breastfeeding and LAM are same	Pre Test		Post Test		McNemar's test
	No	%	No	%	
True	17	28	-		$X^2=42.02$
False	44	72	61	100	P=0.001
total	61	100	61	100	Highly Significant
<b>Manually expressing milk for the infant is effective as suckling</b>	No	%	No	%	
True	21	34	9	15	$X^2=18.4$
False	40	66	52	85	P= 0.001
Total	61	100	61	100	Highly Significant
<b>Malnourished mother cannot feed</b>					
True	09	15	8	13	$X^2=30.8$
False	52	85	53	87	P=0.001
Total	61	100	61	100	Highly Significant
<b>LAM need backup method for its effective use</b>					
True	36	59	4	7	$X^2= 13.8$
False	25	41	57	93	P=0.001
Total	61	100	61	100	Highly Significant
<b>LAM provide protection against HIV</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	
True	08	13	02	03	$X^2=45.45$
False	53	87	59	97	P= 0.001
Total	61	100	61	100	Highly Significant
<b>LAM effect the health of mother</b>					
True	16	26	-		X=43.02
False	45	74	61	100	P=0.001
Total	61	100	61	100	Highly Significant
<b>LAM effect the health of infants</b>					
True	22	36	-		X=37.02
False	39	64	61	100	P= 0.001
Total	61	100	61	100	HS

Above all questions are asked in form of True/False. Significant difference was present between pre and post test results. (Table-3). 80% of them knew about exclusive breastfeeding is for 6 months, but significant difference was found between pre and post test. 82% of the respondents said that ideal milk for newborn in case of separation from the mother is expressed breast milk. This shows that they are aware of the importance of breast milk, but significant difference was observed between pre and post test. Fifty-two percent of the study subject in the pre test told that advice about breastfeeding should start from postnatal visits. Significant difference was present between pre and post test. 74% of the participant gave correct answer about, to gain maximum protection against pregnancy when using LAM, a women must breastfeed on demand day and night. In the post test it was 98%.

**Table-4 : Knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding to suppress the ovulation**

Exclusive breastfeeding to suppress ovulation	Pretest		Post test		McNemar's test
	No	%	No	%	
Upto 6 months	49	80	56	91	X <sup>2</sup> =36.5,P=0.001,HS
4-6 months	06	10	04	07	(R)
2-4 months	03	05	01	02	X=0,P>0.05,NS
Don't know	03	05	-	-	X=0,P>0.05.NS
Total	61	100	61	100	

**DISCUSSION**

The three criteria for successful practice of LAM are fulfilled, LAM can be initiated at any time during the first 6 months of postpartum period. 69% of the participants in our study were aware about the three criteria's. Similar study conducted by A.K.Broagen et al<sup>5</sup> found that 50.3% of the respondents knew about the three criteria's of LAM. In the present study respondents inpre test the effectiveness of LAM is 70-80% in 44% of them and 80-90% in 16% of the them. But in study conducted by Fehring and colleagues reported that LAM ranked the eight most effective family planning method with an average perceived effectiveness ranging from 70-80%<sup>6</sup>.similarly in other study found that LAM was 99% effective when used correctly [7] This shows that there are many areas in which knowledge was incomplete among health care providers. 59% of the participants said that LAM users need backup method for its effective use. Similar findings was observed in other study [5]. Regarding LAM effect on health of the mother and infants, in pre test 26% and 36% respectively gave the incorrect answer. In the post test 100% of them gave correct answer, it could be due to lack of knowledge of the LAM.

Lack of knowledge regarding advice about breastfeeding. Ideal milk for the newborn in case of separation from the mother etc, was found significant difference in pre and post test. This is because the topic as such has not been much emphasized on LAM in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>year nursing students.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Present study highlights that all the participants are aware of the importance of breastfeeding but knowledge regarding LAM was found unsatisfactory. Providers in the health system need to understand why breastfeeding is important and its benefits. This clearly indicates that there should be

1. Promotion of natural family planning method like LAM is needed and more emphasis on this chapter in curriculum
2. LAM be incorporated into hospital, maternity family planning, maternal and child health unit and other primary health care settings.
3. Family planning programme should focus on breastfeeding as a fertility control method especially when no contraceptive alternative are available.

4. National wide communication activities on breastfeeding and LAM use will be implemented via mass media.
5. Training activities need to be strengthened and all medical personnel should be trained to counsel women on LAM use

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