

The effectiveness of breastfeeding technique guidance on the ability of primipara postpartum mothers to provide breastfeeding

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Abstract:

Low breastfeeding in infants is a serious threat to the baby's development as the next generation. Failure to breastfeed due to lack of understanding and ability in breastfeeding techniques. The importance of maternal care in postpartum as an effort to avoid it. The purpose of this study was to identify the influence of breastfeeding techniques guiding postpartum mothers' breastfeeding ability. This research is a pre-experiment with One Group Pretest Posttest. The population in this study were all postpartum primipara mothers treated at Aura Syifa Kediri Hospital with 32 respondents. Sampling technique using simple random sampling with a sample of 30 respondents. The data collection instrument uses a checklist sheet. Data analysis using the Wilcoxon Match Pairs Test. The results obtained Z Count ($4,782$) > Z Table ($1,645$), then H_1 accepted means there are effects of breastfeeding guidance technique towards postpartum primipara mothers' breastfeeding ability in Aura Syifa's Hospital. The study recommended that the breastfeeding technique guidance method be implemented as an intervention to improve breastfeeding programs.

Keywords:

breast milk; breastfeeding; postpartum; primipara

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INTRODUCTION

Many cost-effective and easily implementable interventions can significantly improve neonatal health and survival outcomes. One of the most effective interventions is early initiation of breastfeeding (EIBF) and exclusive breastfeeding (EBF). Early breastfeeding has well-documented benefits for both mothers and infants. For infants, breastfeeding is vital for optimal growth, immunity, and survival, as breast milk provides a balanced composition of nutrients and antibodies. For mothers, breastfeeding reduces morbidity and mortality by promoting uterine contractions, thereby minimizing the risk of postpartum hemorrhage.

The Indonesia Health Survey (SKI) integrates data from the Basic Health Research (Risksdas) and the Indonesian Toddler Nutritional Status Survey (SSGI). The 2023 SKI was designed to evaluate the progress and outcomes of national health development initiatives

implemented over the previous five years, while also monitoring annual trends in child nutritional status (2019–2024). The data generated serve as a reliable representation of health conditions at national, provincial, and district/city levels.

Accurate and comprehensive data regarding the achievements and progress of health development are crucial for the Ministry of Health, as well as for provincial and district governments, in designing evidence-based policies and programs. Such data also contribute to the formulation of the National Medium-Term Health Development Plan (RPJMN) 2024–2029 led by the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas). To ensure methodological rigor, the Health Development Policy Agency (BKKP) collaborates with the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) on survey design and sampling frameworks, and partners with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank on instrument development, guidelines, and reporting processes.

Despite national efforts, 18 provinces have yet to achieve the target coverage for early breastfeeding initiation. In East Java Province, the proportions of mothers initiating breastfeeding within the first hour after birth, within 1–6 hours, and within 7–23 hours are 33.5%, 33.5%, and 3.3%, respectively. Furthermore, data from the East Java Health Profile (2023) indicate that exclusive breastfeeding coverage in the province reached 74%, still below the national target of 77%. Of the total districts and cities, 15 have met the target, while 23, including Kediri City (62%), remain below the expected level.

Low breastfeeding coverage poses a serious threat to infant growth and development, potentially undermining the health and intellectual quality of future generations. Breastfeeding success can be improved when mothers receive adequate support and guidance from healthcare providers. Effective breastfeeding techniques are essential for maternal confidence and infant well-being. Health workers play a pivotal role by providing counseling, education, and hands-on assistance in breastfeeding practices, particularly for postpartum mothers who may face difficulties in the early stages.

A preliminary study conducted at Aura Syifa Hospital, Kediri, revealed that, between September and December 2024, there were 519 deliveries, of which 346 (67%) were normal births, averaging 87 normal deliveries per month. Observations between January 15 and 29, 2025, showed that among 28 primiparous postpartum mothers, 13 (46%) did not initiate breastfeeding on the first postpartum day and instead provided formula milk due to infant crying and perceived low milk production. Further assessment identified that 11 of these mothers demonstrated incorrect breastfeeding positioning.

These findings underscore that effective breastfeeding technique is a fundamental determinant of breastfeeding success, as improper technique often leads to early breastfeeding failure.

Therefore, structured breastfeeding technique assistance provided by health professionals from the early postpartum period is essential to improve mothers' breastfeeding abilities and promote exclusive breastfeeding practices. This phenomenon prompted researchers to examine the effectiveness of breastfeeding technique assistance on the breastfeeding ability of primiparous postpartum mothers.

METHODS

This study employed a pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest–posttest approach. The population consisted of all primiparous postpartum mothers at Aura Syifa Hospital, Kediri, totaling 32 individuals. The sampling technique employed was simple random sampling, yielding a final sample of 30 respondents who met the inclusion criteria.

Data were collected using a structured checklist instrument to assess the respondents' breastfeeding ability before and after the intervention. The data collection process was conducted during the first and second days of the postpartum period, over a one-month study period.

The intervention involved assistance in breastfeeding techniques, including proper positioning and attachment. Each mother was observed and guided during breastfeeding sessions to ensure correct technique and comfort for both mother and infant.

Data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Test to determine differences in breastfeeding ability before and after the intervention. This nonparametric statistical test was chosen because the data did not meet the assumption of normality.

RESULTS

Data collection for this study was conducted from June 7 to June 25, 2025, at the Blabak Community Health Center, Kandat District, Kediri Regency. The respondents consisted of 30 primiparous mothers who met the inclusion criteria and were postpartum. The characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents in the Blabak Community Health Center Work Area, Kediri (n = 30)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	< 20 years	3	10.0
	20–35 years	24	80.0
	> 35 years	3	10.0
Education	No schooling	0	0.0
	Elementary school	2	6.7
	Junior high school	8	26.7
	Senior high school	16	53.3
	College	4	13.3
Occupation	Housewife	20	66.7
	Private employee	5	16.7
	Self-employed	2	6.7
	Civil servant	2	6.7
	Other	1	3.3

As shown in Table 1, most respondents (80%) were aged 20–35 years, a demographic considered optimal for reproduction. More than half (53.3%) of the respondents had completed senior high school, while most were housewives (66.7%), allowing them to spend more time with their infants and engage in breastfeeding activities.

On the first day of observation, a pre-test was conducted to assess breastfeeding ability prior to the intervention. Following two consecutive days of breastfeeding technique assistance, a posttest was conducted to reassess respondents' breastfeeding ability. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Breastfeeding Ability of Postpartum Mothers Before and After Receiving Breastfeeding Technique Assistance (n = 30)

Breastfeeding Ability	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Before Receiving Breastfeeding Technique		
High	2	6.7
Moderate	15	50.0
Low	13	43.3
After Receiving Breastfeeding Technique		
High	25	83.3
Moderate	5	16.7
Low	0	0.0

Table 2 shows that half of the respondents (50%) had moderate breastfeeding ability before receiving assistance, while 43.3% were in the low ability category. Only 6.7% demonstrated high breastfeeding ability before the intervention. A substantial improvement in breastfeeding ability following the intervention. Nearly all respondents (83.3%) demonstrated a high ability, while none fell into the low category.

To determine the statistical significance of the difference between the pretest and posttest results, the Wilcoxon Test was performed. The findings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 4. The Effect of Breastfeeding Technique Assistance on Breastfeeding Ability of Primiparous Postpartum Mothers (n = 30)

Statistical Test	Z Value	p Value
Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	4.782	0.000

The Wilcoxon test yielded a calculated Z value of 4.782, which is greater than the critical value of 1.645 at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, breastfeeding technique assistance has a significant effect on the breastfeeding ability of primiparous postpartum mothers.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that assistance with breastfeeding techniques significantly improved the breastfeeding ability of primiparous postpartum mothers. Before receiving the intervention, most respondents demonstrated only moderate or low ability in breastfeeding, whereas after the mentoring process, a substantial increase was observed, with the majority achieving high ability levels. This result indicates that targeted health education and hands-on guidance are effective in enhancing maternal skills during the early postpartum period.

Breastfeeding technique assistance serves as a form of behavioral intervention that enables mothers to acquire, internalize, and apply correct breastfeeding practices. This improvement supports the behavioral learning theory, which emphasizes that knowledge and skills can be strengthened through repetition, observation, and feedback. When mothers are guided directly by health workers, they are more likely to understand and remember the correct technique, thereby increasing both confidence and competence in breastfeeding.

Educational background emerged as an important factor influencing maternal learning outcomes. The results showed that mothers with higher educational levels were more capable of understanding and effectively applying breastfeeding techniques. This finding is consistent with prior research indicating that education influences maternal health literacy, which in turn affects breastfeeding practices and self-efficacy (Rahmawati et al., 2024). Educated mothers tend to seek, interpret, and utilize health information more effectively, which enhances their ability to employ correct breastfeeding techniques.

The findings are also in line with Durmazoglu (2021), who reported that providing guidance on breastfeeding technique is crucial to prevent lactation-related complications, such as breast

engorgement or poor milk flow. Consistent and structured mentoring helps mothers overcome such barriers and promotes optimal milk production. Similarly, Boybay (2022) emphasized that social support, particularly from spouses, further enhances mothers' commitment to breastfeeding. Mothers who receive emotional and practical support during the postpartum period are more likely to maintain consistent breastfeeding practices compared to those with limited support.

Moreover, the results align with Falah (2025), who demonstrated that online educational interventions can significantly improve mothers' self-efficacy and exclusive breastfeeding rates. While this study applied direct, face-to-face mentoring, both approaches share a common foundation in providing accurate and accessible health information to empower mothers. Combining in-person guidance with digital education platforms may therefore optimize breastfeeding outcomes.

The effectiveness of mentoring observed in this study also reflects the role of health professionals as educators and motivators. Nurses and midwives play an essential role in shaping maternal behaviors through education, modeling, and reinforcement. Individual mentoring creates a supportive environment where mothers feel comfortable discussing challenges and receiving tailored feedback. This person-centered approach aligns with the principles of family-centered care, emphasizing collaboration and mutual respect between health providers and clients.

Overall, the results of this study reinforce that breastfeeding technique assistance is a simple yet highly effective intervention for improving maternal breastfeeding ability. The combination of knowledge transfer, skill demonstration, and personalized support produces meaningful behavioral changes. Therefore, integrating structured mentoring into postpartum care programs can contribute to improving breastfeeding success rates, maternal satisfaction, and infant health outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research at Aura Syifa Hospital, Kediri Regency, it can be concluded that before being given assistance with breastfeeding techniques, most respondents had the ability to provide breast milk in the medium category, after being given assistance with breastfeeding techniques, most respondents had the ability to provide breast milk in the high category, assistance with breastfeeding techniques on the ability to provide breast milk to primiparous postpartum mothers was very effective.

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