



# Assessment of Breast Feeding Practices among Mothers Who Have Conceived through ART

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## Abstract

Exclusive breastfeeding is a cornerstone of child survival and child's health because it provides essential, irreplaceable nutrition for a child's growth and development. According to the worldwide Breastfeeding Scorecard 2018, just 41% of Infants younger than 6 months are exclusively Breastfed. With the increase in sedentary lifestyle, consumption of fast food, lack of exercise, there has been increase in the fertility issues. Infertility negatively affects couples emotionally, socially, and financially. The couples resolve to Assisted Reproductive Techniques (ART) which include frozen embryo transfers, Gamete Intra fallopian transfers, Zygote Intrafallopian transfers, and in IVF - ET.

A study was conducted to assess the breastfeeding practices among mothers conceived through ART using LATCH score. The mean LATCH score varied from 2.83 +/- 1.69 at 08 hrs of birth to 8.55 +/- 1.16 at 48 hrs of birth. The LATCH score of mother/Infant dyads with Assisted Reproduction Techniques (ART) improved from birth to 48 hours subsequently with practice. The mean LATCH score of mothers with LSCS at 8 hrs of birth was 2.94 +/- 1.83 whereas mothers with Full Term Normal Delivery had 3.22 +/- 2.00. The mean LATCH score of mothers with LSCS at 48 hrs of birth was 7.93 +/- 1.37 whereas mothers with Full Term Normal Delivery had 8.68 +/- 1.17. Mode of delivery had a significant impact on breastfeeding practices. Mothers should receive practical support to enable them to initiate and maintain breastfeeding and manage common breastfeeding difficulties.

**Keywords:** Breastfeeding, ART

## Introduction:

Despite the benefits of exclusively nursing for the first 6 months of life being well established, the proportion of early BF initiation is quite low. According to the worldwide Breastfeeding Scorecard 2018, just 41% of Infants younger than 6 months are exclusively BF, significantly below the worldwide target of 70% set for 2030. Less than half of newborns start BF within the 1<sup>st</sup> hour of life.

Only 55% of Indian children are currently entirely Breastfed; in order for India to contribute to the global objective, it must increase this number to 65.7 percent by 2025. A mother's decision to start and continue Breastfeed is influenced by a variety of features, including her understanding of the advantages of Breastmilk, her support networks, her socioeconomic and cultural background, hospital policy, and the method of delivery.

A woman's breastfeeding habits may be influenced by her obstetrics experience. Effective Breastfeeding can only begin with good obstetric procedures during labour. With the increase in sedentary lifestyle, consumption of fast food, lack of exercise, there has been increase in the fertility issues. Infertility negatively affects couples emotionally, socially, and financially. The couples resolve to Assisted Reproductive Techniques (ART) which include frozen embryo transfers, Gamete Intrafallopian transfers, Zygote Intrafallopian transfers, and in IVF - ET.

## Materials and Methods

The present investigation was carried out in tertiary care hospitals in Maharashtra during April 2022 and December 2022, encompassing all newborn babies. The neonates who needed admission to the neonatal intensive care unit, mothers with multiple deliveries, and moms who were ill were excluded from the study.

Demographic and clinical information pertaining to both the mother and the babies were gathered using a pretested form. The study included a sample size of 175 mothers who conceived through ART. A purposive sample of 175 mothers/infant dyads from Tertiary care



hospitals of Pune, Maharashtra was drawn from the population of mothers/infant dyads for the present study. As there were no previous study done on the same topic, a pilot study was conducted to calculate the sample size for the main study. Ethical clearance from the institution was obtained. Written informed consent was taken from the mothers. LATCH is a tool that provides an orderly method for congregation information about BF sessions by assessing the key components like Latching of the baby on the nipple, Audible swallowing, Mother nipple type, Help needed by mother for holding her Infant to the breast. The objective of the study was to assess the Breastfeeding technique using LATCH score among moms/IF dyads with ART at 08,16,24,48 hours of life.

Table 1: LATCH Score

	0	1	2	Score
L Latch	Too sleepy No sustained latch or suck	Repeated attempts for latch or suck An mouth	Grasps breast Tongue down Lips flanged Rhythmical sucking	
A Audible swallowing	None	A few with stimulation	Spontaneous and intermittent (<24 hrs )	
T Type of nipple	Inverted	Flat	Everted (after stimulation)	
C Comfort	Engorged Cracked, bleeding, large blisters, or bruises	Filling Reddened, small blisters or bruises	Soft Non-tender	
H Hold	Full assist (staff holds infant at breast)	Minimal assist (staff holds, then mother takes over)	No assist from staff Mother able to position and hold infant	
<b>TOTAL:</b>				

**Data Analysis and Results:**

Data has been collected among 175 mother/infant dyads for the assessment of breastfeeding practice. Out of 175 mothers, 98 mothers had lower (uterine) segment caesarean section (LSCS), 52 had full term normal delivery (FTND), whereas 25 mothers had instrumentation with vaginal delivery. Out of 175 moms, 60 mothers had gestational period of 38-39 weeks, 59 moms had gestational period of 39-40 weeks whereas 56 i.e., 32% moms had gestational period of 40-42 weeks. Out of 175 infants, 66 infants had birth weight of 2.5-3 kg, 53 Infants had birth weight of 3-3.5 kg whereas 56 Infants had birth weight more than 3.5 kg. 97 were primiparous whereas 78 mothers were multiparous.

Table 2: Feeding practice among the mother/Infant dyads (N=175)

Feeding practice among the mother/IF dyads	Frequency	%
Timing of initiation of breast Feeding	Immediately after birth	35 20
	2 hours after birth	79 45.1
	Next day	61 34.9
Feed colostrum to B	Yes	101 57.7
	No	74 42.3
Any prelacteal feed given to TB before initiation of Breastfeeding	Yes	31 17.7
	No	144 82.3
	Yes	57 32.6

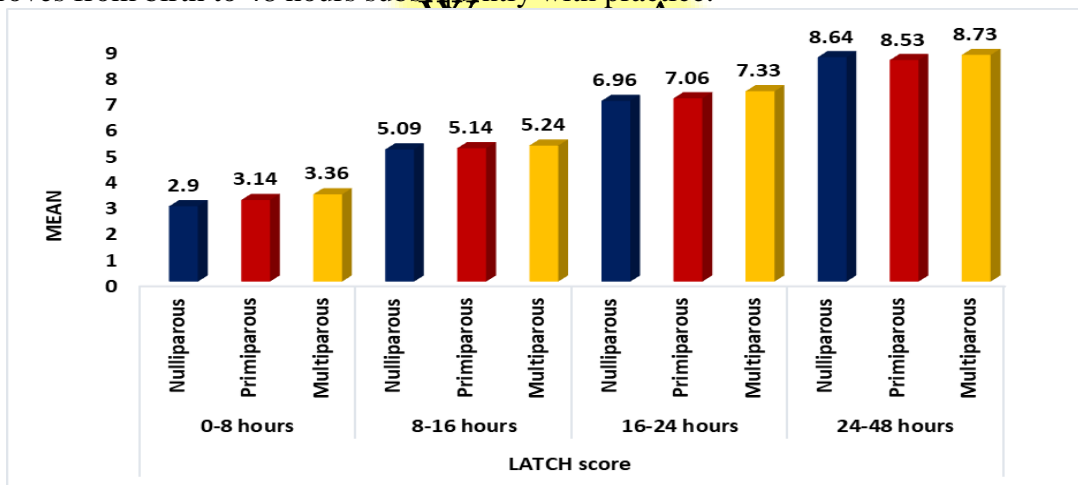


Any antenatal education received by the mother on Breastfeeding	No	118	67.4
<b>Total</b>		175	100.0

**Table 3: LATCH score of mother/infant dyads with Assisted Reproduction Techniques (ART) within 24-48 hours of life**

Variable	Hours of life	N	Mean	SD
LATCH Score	0-8 hrs	175	2.83	1.69
	8-16 hrs	175	5.01	1.47
	16-24 hrs	175	6.86	1.31
	24-48 hrs	175	8.55	1.16

The LATCH score of mother/IF dyads with Assisted Reproduction Techniques (ART) improves from birth to 48 hours subsequently with practice.



**Fig. 1: Mean LATCH score of mother/infant dyads with respect to Parity**

LATCH Score is significantly associated with the number of pregnancies. Higher the number of pregnancies, more is the LATCH score.

**Table 4: Means and SD of LATCH score of mother infant dyads with respect to Mode of delivery**

Variable	Time of assessment	Mode of Delivery	N	Mean	SD
LATCH score	0-8 hours	Full term normal delivery	52	3.22	2.00
		Vaginal delivery with Instrumentation	25	3.19	1.90
		Lower (uterine) Segment Caesarean section	98	2.94	1.83
	8-16 hours	Full term normal delivery	52	5.43	1.39
		Vaginal delivery with Instrumentation	25	5.08	1.55
		Lower (uterine) Segment Caesarean section	98	4.86	1.43
	16-24 hours	Full term normal delivery	52	7.20	1.26
		Vaginal delivery with Instrumentation	25	7.19	1.31
		Lower (uterine) Segment Caesarean section	98	6.80	1.23



	24-48 hours	Full term normal delivery	52	8.68	1.17
		Vaginal delivery with Instrumentation	25	8.60	1.19
		Lower (uterine) Segment Caesarean section	98	7.93	1.37

The above table depicts that mode of delivery had a significant impact on breastfeeding practices. Postoperative pain can be one of the reason which is affecting the breastfeeding practices.

The data revealed that shape of breast such as small nipple, flat nipple, sore nipple, or retracted nipple were cited as the reason for improper breastfeeding. Some of the mothers expressed that there is not enough milk in breast and there is less time to lactate.

In Indian culture, elderly persons/relatives play significant role in educating/advising new-moms about child rearing and breastfeeding, hence few moms reportedly stopped breastfeeding due to relatives' advice. The pain perceived by mothers during breastfeeding is a common phenomenon.

**Discussion:**

Study conducted by Erbayadar NP, Erbaydar T (2020) in Turkey to assess the relationship between caesarean section and Breastfeeding reveals that Mothers who underwent caesarean section had a higher risk of late initiation of BF and nonexclusive BF during the three days post-delivery as compared to normal deliveries. Moms conceived through ART face unique challenges related to Breastfeeding and Mother Infant bonding and hence should receive good antenatal counseling and classes on Breastfeeding. Health care professionals including nurses, midwives, and lactation consultants should be educated and trained to provide specialized guidance to moms through ART.

**Conclusion:**

LATCH Score tool is a very valuable tool used in health care settings for assessing the Breast Feeding Practices among mother/infant dyads. Postnatal breastfeeding counselling and support has been shown to increase rates of breastfeeding up to 6 months of age. Early adjustments to position and attachment can prevent breastfeeding problems at a later time. Frequent coaching and support helps build maternal confidence.

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