

A Cross-Sectional Study to Assess Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Regarding Perineal Care among Postpartum Women in a Selected Hospital Gurugram

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ABSTRACT

Background: Postpartum period is an important phase in a woman's life where good personal hygiene and self-care are critical in prevention of complication and speed up recovery. Perineal care plays an important role in the prevention of infection, promotion of healing, decrease of pain and improvement of maternal well-being. In spite of advancement of maternal healthcare, deficient knowledge and poor practices on perineal care are still common among postpartum women.

Methods: Quantitative study using a descriptive cross sectional research design was conducted among 100 post partum women recruited using non probability convenient sampling technique. Data were collected using structured questionnaire comprising demographic characteristics, knowledge questionnaire, attitude score and practice check list. Descriptive statistics was employed to describe the result.

Results: Our results revealed that 50% of participants had an average knowledge, 30% had a good knowledge, and 20% had a poor knowledge about perineal care. About the attitude, 52% had a moderately favorable attitude, 30% had a favourable attitude, and 18% had an unfavorable attitude. Practice assessment showed that 46% had average practices, 30% had good practices, and 24% had poor practices.

Conclusion: Postpartum women have average knowledge, moderately favorable attitudes, and average practices related to perineal care. Continuous health education and nursing interventions are needed to enhance their awareness and promote healthy postpartum behaviors.

Keywords: *Perineal Care, Postpartum Women, Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, Maternal Health, Postnatal Care.*

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INTRODUCTION

Motherhood is one of the greatest events in a woman's life. The postpartum period, also called the "puerperium," lasts from childbirth up to about 6 weeks later. Women experience many physiological, psychosocial, and emotional changes that need special attention and care during this time. Good postpartum care helps ensure proper healing, prevents complications, and supports the health of both mother and child.

Perineal care refers to the care of the cleanliness and hygiene of the perineum after childbirth. After vaginal delivery, an episiotomy, or tearing of the perineum, special care is needed to avoid infection and aid tissue healing. Without good perineal hygiene, women can develop puerperal sepsis (infection), urinary tract infection, wound breakdown, poor healing, and more maternal morbidity.

WHO highlights the importance of postpartum hygiene and maternal education as integral parts of quality maternal healthcare. Nurses are crucial in teaching postpartum women about personal hygiene, wound care, hand hygiene, use of sanitary pads, and recognizing warning signs.

Assessing knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) on perineal care among health-care providers identifies their educational needs and helps design useful interventions for improving maternal outcome.

Postpartum infections remain the leading cause of maternal morbidity world wide. Many mothers lack appropriate knowledge about correct perineal hygiene especially in developing countries. Health education programmes may help to decrease complications and hasten maternal recovery. Thus, we aimed to establish the

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baseline knowledge, attitude and practices on perineal care among postpartum women and define areas needing improvement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of knowledge regarding perineal care among postpartum women.
2. To assess the attitude of postpartum women towards perineal care.
3. To assess the practices related to perineal care among postpartum women.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative research approach with a descriptive cross-sectional research design to assess Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) on perineal care among postpartum women in the selected hospital. A total of 100 postpartum women who fulfilled inclusion criteria were selected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire developed after an extensive review of literature and expert consultation. The tool consisted of four sections: Section A included socio-demographic variables such as age, educational status, occupation, religion, type of family, residence, monthly family income, parity, and source of information regarding perineal care; Section B comprised a structured knowledge questionnaire; Section C included a Likert attitude scale; and Section D consisted of a practice checklist related to perineal care. Prior administrative permission was obtained from the concerned authorities, and informed written consent was taken from all participants prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were ensured during the course of the study. A pilot study was carried out to check the feasibility and reliability of the tool before the actual one. Collected data were coded, tabulated and analysed by applying both descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation have been used to summarise the findings which are presented as tables, charts, and graphs for interpretation.

The tool consisted of four sections:

Section A: Sociodemographic Variables

Section B: Knowledge Questionnaire

Section C: Attitude Scale

Section D: Practice Checklist

RESULTS

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of postpartum women belonged to the age group of 20–24 years (34%). Most participants had completed secondary education (32%), were housewives (58%), belonged to the Hindu religion (82%), and lived in nuclear families (54%).

More than half of the respondents resided in rural areas (56%), and 38% reported a monthly family income between ₹10,001 and ₹20,000. The majority of participants were multiparous (58%), and health professionals were identified as the primary source of information regarding perineal care by 46% of the respondents.

Assessment of knowledge regarding perineal care showed that 50% of postpartum women had average knowledge, 30%. These findings suggest that though most women were aware of basics of perineal hygiene, a sizeable number still lacked good knowledge on preventing infection, right technique of cleaning, and importance of perineal cleanliness in postpartum period. The findings related to attitude revealed that 52% of postpartum women had a moderately favourable attitude towards perineal care, while 30% had a favourable attitude and 18% had an unfavourable attitude. The results suggest that most women recognized the importance of maintaining perineal hygiene and understood its role in preventing postpartum complications and promoting recovery.

Assessment of practices regarding perineal care demonstrated that 46% of the participants had average practices, 30% had good practices, and 24% had poor practices. Although a substantial proportion of women reported following recommended hygienic measures, some participants still demonstrated inadequate practices related to hand hygiene, frequency of perineal cleansing, and proper sanitary pad management. These findings underscore the gap between knowledge and actual practice of recommended perineal care. In sum, the study found that pregnant women had average knowledge, moderately favourable attitudes and average practice towards perineal care. The findings highlighted the need for ongoing health education, counseling, and nursing intervention to improve maternal awareness and improve perineal care practices in order to reduce the risk of postpartum morbidity and mortality and improve maternal health.

Section I: Distribution of respondent according to demographic variables.

Section II: Distribution of respondents according to level of knowledge regarding perineal care among postpartum women in a selected hospital.

Section III: Distribution of respondents according to level of attitude of postpartum women towards perineal care in a selected hospital.

Section IV: Distribution of respondents according to practices related to perineal care among postpartum women in a selected hospital

Section I: Distribution of respondent according to demographic variables.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Sociodemographic Variables Among Postpartum Women (N = 100)

S. No.	Sociodemographic Variables	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Age	Below 20 years	12	12%
		20–24 years	34	34%
		25–29 years	30	30%
		30–34 years	16	16%
		35 years and above	8	8%
2	Educational Status	No formal education	10	10%
		Primary education	18	18%
		Secondary education	32	32%
		Higher secondary	24	24%
		Graduate and above	16	16%
3	Occupation	Housewife	58	58%
		Private employee	25	25%
		Government employee	8	8%
		Self-employed	9	9%
		Others	0	0%
4	Religion	Hindu	82	82%
		Muslim	18	18%
		Christian	0	0%
		Others	0	0%
5	Type of Family	Nuclear family	54	54%
		Joint family	38	38%
		Extended family	8	8%
6	Place of Residence	Urban	44	44%
		Rural	56	56%
7	Monthly Family Income	Below ₹10,000	22	22%
		₹10,001–₹20,000	38	38%
		₹20,001–₹30,000	26	26%
		Above ₹30,000	14	14%
8	Parity	Primipara	42	42%
		Multipara	58	58%
9	Mode of Delivery	Normal vaginal delivery	40	40%
		Vaginal delivery with episiotomy	36	36%
		Cesarean section	24	24%
10	Type of Perineal Wound	Episiotomy	36	36%
		Tear	18	18%
		None	46	46%
11	Days Postpartum	1–3 days	28	28%
		4–7 days	34	34%
		8–14 days	24	24%
		More than 14 days	14	14%
12	Source of Information on Perineal Care	Health professionals	46	46%
		Family/friends	24	24%
		Mass media	12	12%
		Antenatal classes	10	10%
		Others	8	8%

The above table depicts the distribution of postpartum women according to their sociodemographic characteristics in the selected hospital. A total of 100 postpartum women participated in the study.

The findings revealed that the majority of postnatal women were aged 20–24 years (34%), had secondary education (32%), and were housewives (58%). Most participants were Hindu (82%), belonged to nuclear families (54%), and resided in rural areas (56%). Regarding monthly family income, 38% reported an income of ₹10,001–₹20,000. More than half of the women were multipara (58%). In terms of obstetric characteristics, 40% had normal vaginal delivery, 36% underwent vaginal

delivery with episiotomy, and 24% had cesarean section. Nearly half of the participants had no perineal wound (46%), while 36% had episiotomy wounds and 18% had perineal tears. Most women were 4–7 days postpartum (34%), and health professionals were the primary source of information on perineal care for 46% of participants.

Section II: Distribution of respondents according to level of knowledge regarding perineal care among postpartum women in a selected hospital.

Table 2: Distribution of Postpartum Women According to Level of Knowledge Regarding Perineal Care (N = 100)

Level of Knowledge	Score Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Poor Knowledge	0–6	20	20%
Average Knowledge	7–13	50	50%
Good Knowledge	14–20	30	30%
Total		100	100%

The table reveals the level of knowledge regarding perineal care among postpartum women in the selected hospital.

Out of 100 participants, the majority 50 (50%) had average knowledge regarding perineal care. About 30 (30%) women possessed good knowledge, indicating

adequate awareness about hygiene, infection prevention, wound care, and postpartum self-care practices. However, 20 (20%) participants had poor knowledge regarding perineal care, reflecting inadequate understanding of proper hygienic measures and prevention of complications.

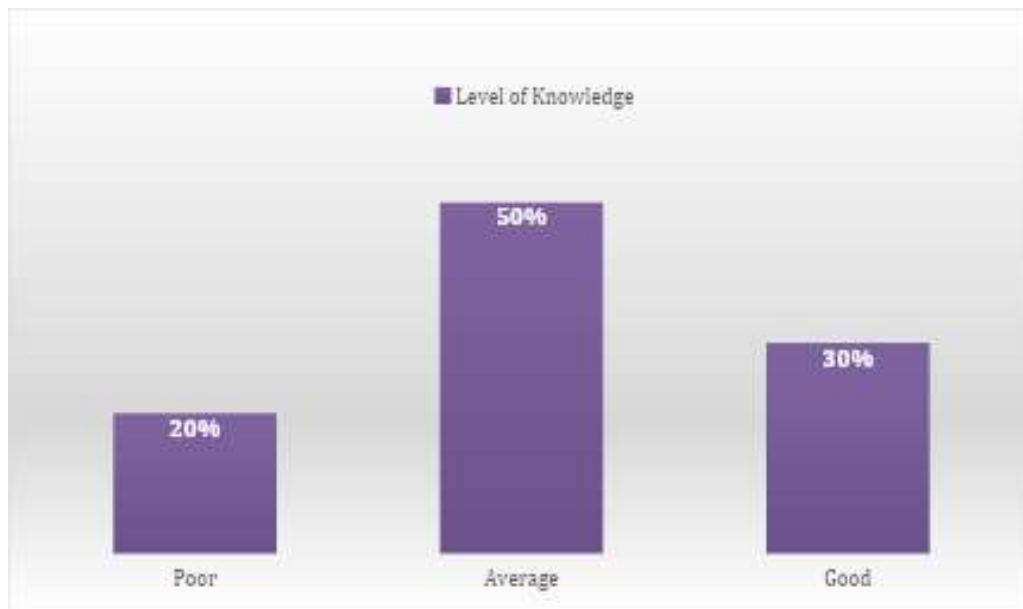


Fig.13: Bar diagram showing distribution of respondent according to level of knowledge

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Knowledge Scores Regarding Perineal Care (N = 100)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
Knowledge Score	12.18	4.21

The mean knowledge score of postpartum women regarding perineal care was 12.18 ± 4.21 . This indicates that the overall knowledge level of the participants was average.

Section III: Distribution of respondents according to level of attitude of postpartum women towards perineal care in a selected hospital.

Table 4: Distribution of Postpartum Women According to Level of Attitude
(N = 100)

Level of Attitude	Score Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Unfavorable Attitude	<60	18	18%
Moderately Favorable Attitude	60–79	52	52%
Favorable Attitude	80–100	30	30%
Total		100	100%

The table shows that the majority of postpartum women 52 (52%) had a moderately favorable attitude towards perineal care, indicating an average level of perception and acceptance regarding postpartum hygiene practices. About 30 (30%) of women demonstrated a favorable attitude, reflecting positive beliefs regarding infection prevention,

hygiene maintenance, and self-care practices during the postpartum period. However, 18 (18%) of participants had an unfavorable attitude, suggesting misconceptions, lack of awareness, or negative beliefs related to perineal care and postpartum hygiene.

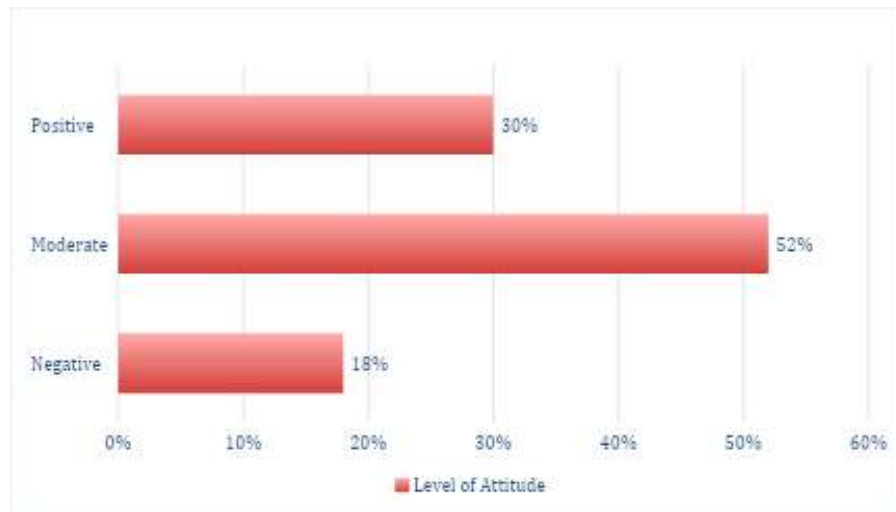


Fig.14: Bar diagram showing distribution of respondent according to level of attitude

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Attitude Scores Towards Perineal Care
(N = 100)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
Attitude Score	72.46	10.82

The mean attitude score towards perineal care among postpartum women was 72.46 ± 10.82 . This indicates that the participants had a moderate attitude towards perineal care.

Section IV: Distribution of respondents according to practices related to perineal care among postpartum women in a selected hospital

Table 6: Distribution of Postpartum Women According to Level of Practice
(N = 100)

Level of Practice	Score Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Poor Practice	<30	24	24%
Average Practice	30–44	46	46%
Good Practice	45–60	30	30%
Total		100	100%

The table depicts the distribution of postpartum women according to their level of practice regarding perineal care.

Out of 100 participants, the majority 46 (46%) had average perineal care practices, indicating moderate adherence to recommended hygiene measures and postpartum self-care activities. About 30 (30%) women

demonstrated good practices, reflecting proper implementation of cleaning techniques, hand hygiene, sanitary pad changing, and infection prevention measures. However, 24 (24%) participants had poor practices regarding perineal care, suggesting inadequate application of appropriate postpartum hygiene behaviors.



Fig.15: Bar diagram showing distribution of respondent according to level of practice

Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation of Practice Scores Regarding Perineal Care (N = 100)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
Practice Score	38.62	8.14

The mean practice score regarding perineal care among postpartum women was 38.62 ± 8.14 . This indicates that the participants demonstrated average perineal care practices.

CONCLUSION

Postpartum women have average knowledge, moderately favourable attitudes and average practices concerning perineal care. Gaps still exist in their knowledge and practice. Our findings highlight the need for continuous health education and nursing interventions.

LIMITATIONS

1. The study was limited to a selected hospital only.
2. The sample size was restricted to 100 postpartum women.
3. Convenience sampling technique was used, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.
4. The study assessed practices based on participants' responses, which may be subject to reporting bias.

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