

Knowledge, attitudes and practices of mothers and knowledge of health workers regarding care of the newborn umbilical cord

Obimbo, E; Musoke, RN; Were, F

Date: 1999

Abstract:

OBJECTIVE: To determine the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of mothers and the knowledge of health workers regarding care of the newborn umbilical cord. **DESIGN:** Cross-sectional survey. **SUBJECTS:** Mothers with infants less than three months of age attending well child clinics and health workers (HW) in the clinics, maternity and newborn units of public health, facilities serving an urban slum area in Nairobi, Kenya. **RESULTS:** Of the 307 mothers interviewed, 91% and 28% of mothers knew of the need for hygiene whilst cutting and tying the cord, respectively. Regarding postnatal cord care, 40% had good knowledge and 66% good practice. Fifty-one percent of mothers knew and 54% practised postnatal cord care for the appropriate duration of time. Seventy-nine percent of mothers were afraid of handling an unhealed cord. After multivariate analysis, the following variables showed significant independent association with good maternal KAP; increased level of education (OR 2.3, $p < 0.001$), living in middle class areas rather than slums (OR 1.5, $p < 0.03$), increased maternal age (OR 1.8, $p < 0.001$), acquisition of knowledge from a HW rather than from other sources (OR 1.5, $p < 0.001$), and living in stone/brick houses rather than mud houses ($p = 0.01$). Fifty per cent of HW had correct knowledge on type of postnatal cord care, and 79% had correct knowledge on duration required for the same. The knowledge of 50% on type of care was incorrect by international standards, but was in keeping with Nursing Council of Kenya teaching. **CONCLUSION:** Mothers had good knowledge on the need for hygiene when cutting the cord, had poor knowledge and practice in other aspects of cord care, and were afraid of handling the cord. Poor KAP was associated with young, poor mothers of low education, who had acquired their knowledge from sources other than HW. The knowledge of a large proportion of HW was incorrect and outdated. We recommend that health education on cord care be given at all levels of contact with mothers and that knowledge of all primary HW on cord care be updated. **PIP:** Using a cross-sectional survey, this study investigated the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of mothers and the knowledge of health workers regarding care of the umbilical cord. The study interviewed a total of 307 mothers with infants less than 3 months old and 64 health workers (HWs) in an urban slum area in Nairobi, Kenya. The results showed that 91% and 28% of mothers knew of the need for hygiene while cutting and tying the cord, respectively. As to postnatal cord care, 40% had good knowledge and 66% had good practice. However, 79% of mothers were afraid of handling an unhealed cord. Results of multivariate analysis showed that the following variables had significant independent association with good maternal KAP: increased level of education, living in middle class areas, increased maternal age, and acquisition of knowledge from HWs rather than from other sources. 50% of HWs had correct knowledge on type of postnatal cord care, but the knowledge of 50% on type of care was incorrect by international standards. Based on the findings, it was recommended that good health and cord care practices be taught at all levels of contact with mothers and that knowledge of all primary HWs on cord care be updated

[Show full item record](#)