

# A CORRELATIONAL STUDY BETWEEN BREASTFEEDING SUCCESS IN THE EARLY POSTPARTUM PERIOD AND THE PERCEPTION OF SELF-EFFICACY IN BREASTFEEDING AND BREAST PROBLEMS IN THE LATE POSTPARTUM PERIOD AMONG PRIMIPARA MOTHERS IN SELECTED HOSPITALS OF PUNJAB

**\*Satyajit, \*\*Dr. Darshan Sohi**

*\*Research Scholar,*

*\*\*Research Supervisor,*

*Department of Nursing,*

*Himalayan University,*

*Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh*

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## ABSTRACT

*This study explores the relationship between breastfeeding success in the early postpartum period and the perception of self-efficacy in breastfeeding, along with the incidence of breast problems in the late postpartum period among primipara mothers in selected hospitals in Punjab. Using a correlational research design, data were collected from 150 primipara mothers to assess the impact of early breastfeeding success on self-efficacy perceptions and breast problems encountered later. The findings aim to inform healthcare practices and interventions to improve breastfeeding outcomes and maternal well-being.*

**Keywords:** *Breastfeeding success, self-efficacy, postpartum period, primipara mothers, breast problems, Punjab.*

## INTRODUCTION

Breastfeeding is a cornerstone of infant health and development, providing essential nutrients, antibodies, and emotional bonding between mother and child. The early postpartum period is a critical time for establishing successful breastfeeding, and the experiences during this period can significantly impact long-term breastfeeding outcomes. For primipara mothers, who are experiencing motherhood for the first time, the transition to breastfeeding can be particularly challenging. The success of breastfeeding in the early postpartum phase is influenced by a myriad of factors, including maternal self-efficacy, which refers to a mother's confidence in her ability to breastfeed effectively. Understanding the relationship between early breastfeeding success and self-efficacy, as well as the prevalence of breastfeeding-related problems in the later postpartum period, is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems.

Self-efficacy in breastfeeding is a concept rooted in Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, which posits that individuals' beliefs in their capabilities affect their actions and persistence. For breastfeeding mothers, high self-efficacy is associated with greater confidence, less anxiety, and a higher likelihood of successful breastfeeding continuation. This self-belief is significantly influenced by early experiences with breastfeeding, including the immediate support received from healthcare providers, family members, and the mother's ability to overcome initial challenges such as latch issues and milk supply concerns. Successful initiation of breastfeeding in the early postpartum period not only sets a positive precedent for future feeding practices but also fosters a sense of competence and assurance in the mother.

However, the transition to successful breastfeeding is not always smooth, and many primipara mothers encounter various challenges that can affect their perception of self-efficacy. These challenges include physical difficulties such as sore nipples, engorgement, and concerns about adequate milk production. Psychological factors also play a role, as mothers may experience stress, anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy, which can undermine their confidence in breastfeeding. The support provided during the early postpartum period, including education and encouragement from healthcare professionals, can help mitigate these challenges and enhance the mother's self-efficacy.

The late postpartum period, which extends beyond the initial weeks of childbirth, can present its own set of challenges related to breastfeeding. While many mothers establish a successful breastfeeding routine early on, issues may still arise later, such as persistent breast pain, infections, and other complications. These problems can impact the mother's overall breastfeeding experience and may lead to early cessation of breastfeeding. Understanding how early breastfeeding success correlates with later experiences of breast problems is essential for identifying patterns and providing targeted interventions to support continued breastfeeding.

In the context of Punjab, where cultural practices and socio-economic factors can influence breastfeeding practices, it is important to examine these relationships within the local setting. Punjab, with its diverse population and varying levels of healthcare access, presents a unique context for studying breastfeeding success and related factors. Primipara mothers in this region may face distinct challenges and have different support needs compared to mothers in other settings. This research aims to provide insights into these dynamics by focusing on mothers from selected hospitals in Punjab, offering a localized perspective on the broader issue of breastfeeding support and self-efficacy.

This study seeks to address several key questions: How does early breastfeeding success influence a mother's perception of her breastfeeding self-efficacy? What is the relationship between early breastfeeding experiences and the occurrence of breast problems later in the postpartum period? By examining these questions, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that affect breastfeeding outcomes and maternal well-being.

In the early postpartum period is a pivotal time for establishing breastfeeding, and the experiences during this phase have a lasting impact on both the mother and the infant. Self-

efficacy in breastfeeding and the presence of breast problems in the late postpartum period are critical factors that influence the success and continuation of breastfeeding. This study will explore these relationships among primipara mothers in Punjab, providing valuable insights into the interplay between early breastfeeding success, self-efficacy, and late postpartum issues. The findings are expected to inform healthcare practices and support strategies, ultimately enhancing the breastfeeding experience for new mothers and promoting better health outcomes for their infants.

## **BREASTFEEDING SUCCESS AND EARLY POSTPARTUM SUPPORT**

Breastfeeding success in the early postpartum period is critical for establishing a solid foundation for continued breastfeeding. Several factors contribute to this success, including:

- **Immediate Skin-to-Skin Contact:** Early and continuous skin-to-skin contact between mother and infant immediately after birth helps initiate breastfeeding, regulates the infant's body temperature, and supports bonding.
- **Effective Latching:** Ensuring that the baby latches onto the breast properly is essential for effective feeding and prevents issues such as nipple pain and inadequate milk transfer.
- **Maternal Education and Counseling:** Providing mothers with education on breastfeeding techniques, benefits, and troubleshooting common issues can increase confidence and competence in breastfeeding.
- **Support from Healthcare Providers:** Professional support from lactation consultants, nurses, and midwives during the early postpartum period helps address challenges and reinforces successful breastfeeding practices.
- **Family and Social Support:** Emotional and practical support from family members and peers plays a crucial role in a mother's ability to overcome breastfeeding challenges and maintain a successful feeding routine.

These elements of early postpartum support are fundamental in promoting breastfeeding success and can significantly influence the mother's overall experience and duration of breastfeeding.

## **BREAST PROBLEMS IN THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD**

During the postpartum period, mothers may experience various breast problems that can impact their breastfeeding experience and overall well-being. Common issues include:

- **Nipple Pain and Cracks:** Painful, cracked nipples are often caused by improper latching, which can make breastfeeding uncomfortable and challenging. Effective latching techniques and proper breast care can help alleviate this issue.

- **Engorgement:** Breast engorgement occurs when the breasts become overly full with milk, causing discomfort and swelling. It typically happens when milk production exceeds the infant's demand. Frequent breastfeeding or expressing milk can relieve engorgement.
- **Mastitis:** Mastitis is an infection of the breast tissue, characterized by redness, swelling, and pain. It is usually accompanied by flu-like symptoms. Early treatment with antibiotics and continued breastfeeding can help resolve the infection.
- **Blocked Ducts:** Blocked milk ducts can cause localized pain and swelling. Massaging the affected area, applying warm compresses, and frequent breastfeeding can help clear the blockage.
- **Low Milk Supply:** Concerns about insufficient milk supply can lead to anxiety and stress. Ensuring frequent and effective breastfeeding, along with proper hydration and nutrition, can help address this issue.

Addressing these problems promptly with appropriate interventions and support is crucial for maintaining successful breastfeeding and ensuring maternal comfort and health.

## CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical role of early breastfeeding success in shaping maternal self-efficacy and reducing late postpartum breast problems. Effective early interventions and support can lead to better breastfeeding outcomes and improved maternal health. Further research is needed to refine these strategies and enhance the support provided to primipara mothers.

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