

# An Exploration of the Experiences of First-Birth Women in Exclusive Breast-Feeding: A Qualitative Study

SIRAJO MOHAMMED<sup>1\*</sup>, LEE KHUAN<sup>2</sup>, IRMI ZARINA BINTI ISMAIL<sup>3</sup>, RUTH PACKIAVATHY RAJEN DURAI<sup>4</sup>, SALEH NGASKI GARBA<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State, Nigeria

<sup>2,3,4</sup> University Putra Malaysia

<sup>5</sup> Bayero University, Kano – Nigeria

\*Corresponding Author: sirajom88@gmail.com or gs57691@student.upm.edu.my

## ABSTRACT

The joint World Health Organization (WHO)/UNICEF Baby-Friendly initiative has identified ten steps towards successful breastfeeding. The first two steps are related to critical management procedures. Steps three and four refer to key clinical practices while step number five focuses on teaching mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation for optimum breastfeeding. However, poor first-time mothers in rural areas and some working-class women in urban areas of Kebbi State, Nigeria have low rates of exclusive breastfeeding mainly due to a lack of proper teaching and awareness. Of concern is that there are few limited published data or research on rural and urban mothers' infant feeding practices in Kebbi State, Northern Nigeria. A recent study of urban mothers living in informal settlements in Kebbi State, Nigeria has indicated low application of the WHO recommendations on breastfeeding with very few working mothers expressing breast milk for housemaids to give their infants. Poor rural mothers in the community do not receive adequate teaching on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding (EBF). These mothers are not given proper health talk and health teaching at the antenatal care appointments (ANC) due to poor health systems. There is little information available on the infant feeding strategies that rural and urban first-time mothers in Kebbi state, Nigeria use. Hence, there are very few examples of qualitative research efforts involving first-time mothers towards achieving increased awareness on EBF. This study aims to explore the experiences of first-time mothers on exclusive breastfeeding; as well as the possible factors that cause negative experiences. The three (3) research questions for this study are: 1) What are first-time mothers' experiences of care of postpartum haemorrhage (PPH) on admission in the hospital? 2) What do participants learn about EBF during the antenatal appointment? 3) What programme design factors influence learning about EBF among first-time mothers? A qualitative research method in which participants play an active, rather than a passive, role will be used, thus allowing the abstraction of a particular aspect of human behaviour (experience of first-birth women). A phenomenological approach will be applied in this study because it describes the experiences of the participants rather than explaining them. A purposive sampling will be used to recruit the sample, hence individuals and sites selected will be based on information they can give about the research problem and central phenomenon in the inquiry. The strategy of snowballing involves initially locating a few individuals with relevant criteria and interviewing them, and then, asking these participants to introduce the names of other people who meet the same criteria as they do. The criteria for recruiting the samples are mothers who; 1) give birth for the first time, 2) have attended ANC appointments. The primary criterion of sample size in the present study will be the redundancy of information. Data will continue to be collected until saturation point is achieved. Different sources of data will also be utilized such as personal interviews, non-participation observations and documents. Hence, there will be data triangulation as a qualitative research approach. The data obtained will be analysed using the constant comparative and thematic analysis method. The timeframe of the present study will be six months for data collection and analysis considering the duration of the interview and transcription. It is expected that the findings of the present study will be helpful toward redesigning the campaign on EBF in Nigeria and it is hoped that, some new ideas will emerge that will contribute towards encouraging women on EBF.

**Keywords:** first-time mothers, exclusive breastfeeding, first birth women, milk supply, experiences, supplement.