Assessing knowledge and attitudes of staff towards breastmilk for preterm infants as part of the PRIME (PReterm Infants need Milk Early) initiative

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Background/Aims:

Benefits of breast milk (BM) for preterm infants include a reduced risk of necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) and sepsis. Our aim was to evaluate the knowledge and attitudes of staff towards BM for preterm infants as part of a QI project promoting early BM for these preterm infants.

Design/Methods:

- Cross-sectional survey study
- Tertiary maternity hospital, Jan – Feb 2018
- Anonymous questionnaire; data analysed with SPSS

Results:

- 100 staff completed survey (Figure 1)
- All agreed BM important for preterm infants
- 47% felt confident assisting with hand expressing
- Less than half (45%) felt that mothers should express within 2 hrs of delivery; 13% responded 12-24 hrs

- Majority (61%) responded that mothers should express 8-10 times daily; 17% thought 4-6 times sufficient
- When asked what was most helpful to promote milk supply following delivery, 67% reported expressing milk; 33% reported rest/fluids
- 48% reported prevention of NEC as a reason that BM is important for preterm infants
- 51% satisfied with the current training provided

Conclusion(s):

- This survey illustrates the knowledge and attitudes towards BM for preterm infants in our hospital; **these results informed a teaching program**
- PRIME focuses on delivering consistent messages, to both parents and staff, for optimising early BM supply for preterm infants: *7 key messages for the first 7 days*