



## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Exclusive breastfeeding practices are commonly done until the baby reaches the age of six months; however, those practices have been decreasing continuously. The period of the first month of life is a critical moment in the sustainability of breastfeeding practices so that optimal efforts are needed to maintain the breastfeeding duration. In point of fact, the early initiation of breastfeeding can help increase maternal confidence and give maternal positive psychological condition in order to maintain the process of the following breastfeeding practices.

**Objective:** To find out the impact of the early initiation of breastfeeding on breastfeeding practices in the first month of infant life.

**Method:** This was an observational study with cohort prospective study design using quantitative and qualitative approaches. Sample size was 106 pairs of mothers and babies. The group from Pahandut Public Health Center (PHC) was 53 women applied with early initiation of breastfeeding (exposed group) and the group from Tangkiling PHP was 53 women without early initiation of breastfeeding (non exposed group). In both groups, dissemination on early initiation of breastfeeding complete and exclusive breastfeeding practices and follow up for one month for breastfeeding practices were given. The quantitative data analysis was done through two stages, namely bivariable analysis with chi-square test and multivariate analysis with logistic regression. In addition, qualitative data analysis used exploration of in depth interview.

**Result:** The result of multivariable analysis with modeling showed that there was a significant relationship between early initiation of breastfeeding and breastfeeding practices in the first month of life (OR=21.37;95%CI=5.42-84.21) by controlling the variables of the decision to breastfeed (OR=14.95;95%CI=2.96-75.5), nipple condition (OR=13.44;95%CI=2.43-74.34), residence (OR=12.48;95%CI=3.09-50.5) and gestational age (OR=6.24;95%CI=1.56-24.9) that could give contribution as much as 49% for the breastfeeding practices in the first month of life. The result of in depth interview showed that breastfeeding practices were highly influenced by information obtained by the women when checking up their pregnancy so that the decision to breastfeed could be made previously and the women perceived the benefit of breastfeeding practices for her and her infant's health. There were some reasons why the mother did not give complete breastfeeding, among others, the abnormal nipple condition and the mother's fear on her infant's health for preterm baby.

**Conclusion:** Breastfeeding practices in the first month of life occur more in mothers who practice early initiation of breastfeeding than in those who do not. Mothers with at term delivery, nipple normal condition, breastfeeding decision prior to delivery, and residence in village areas have a greater chance of practicing breastfeeding in the first month of life.

**Keywords:** early initiation of breastfeeding, breastfeeding practices, complete breastfeeding