

Determining the current association between maternal education and breastfeeding practice in Bangladesh to strengthen health systems for an improved tomorrow

Dr. Israt Iqbal MBBS, MPH

Chief Medical Officer and Psychological Counsellor, Medical Center, United International University

Background

Breastfeeding is almost universal in Bangladesh; 96% of children are breastfed during the first year of life and 87% are breastfed until age 2. There is evidence that the practice of infant breastfeeding is not optimal in Bangladesh and are contributing to the high levels of malnutrition. The challenge is to provide the necessary information, care, and support to caregivers and their families to enable them to give the best care to their young children

<https://twitter.com/unicefbd/status/1240488196565336064>



Objectives

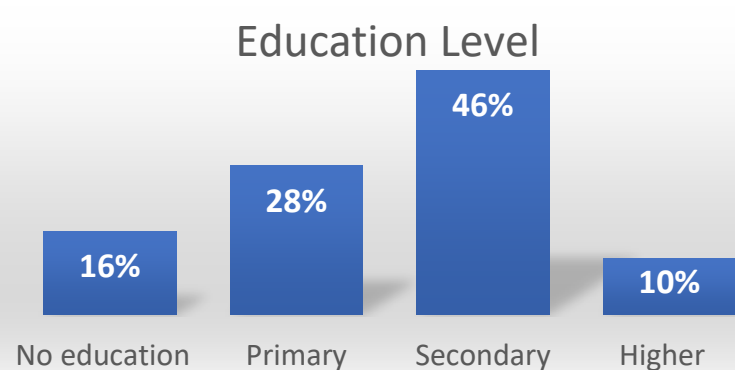
This study aims to see the current association between breastfeeding practice and mother's education in accordance with BDHS 2014. Despite all the interventions and study on child breastfeeding in demographically different areas of Bangladesh, I especially decided to focus on breastfeeding in relation to maternal education which can proportionately improve status ratio of stunting, wasting and malnutrition amongst children

Methods

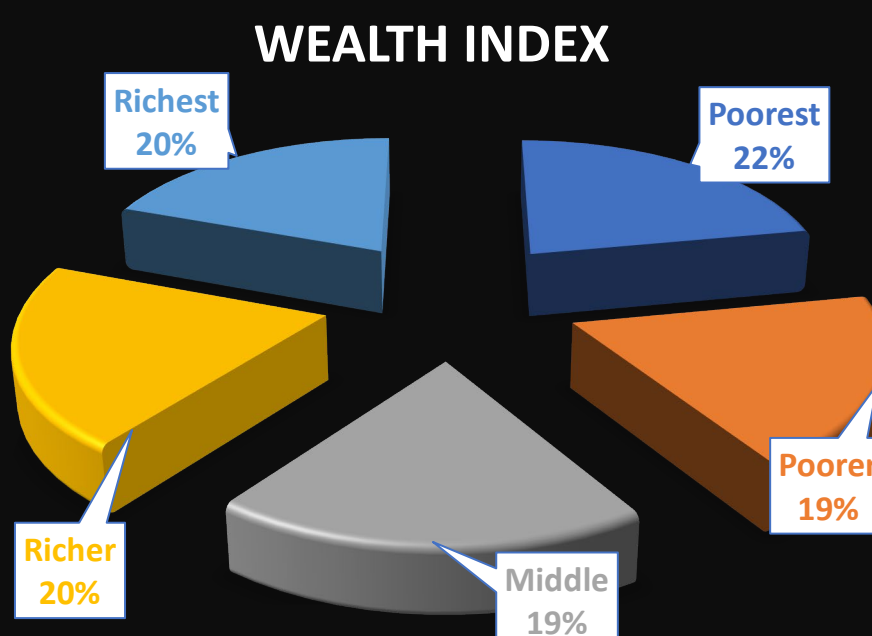
The data used was extracted from BDHS-2014 from 7886 Bangladeshi married women from age 15 to 49 years. Multiple regressions were applied for the determinant of child breast feeding to find the impact of mother's education in exclusive breastfeeding practice. Here outcome variable is continuous breastfeeding and mothers' education is independent categorical data and other influencing factors are mothers' age, place of residence, wealth index

Result

Out of the 7886 samples, most of the mothers (46%) have up to a Secondary and Higher Secondary level of education and the minimum number (10%) of mothers were from higher level of education

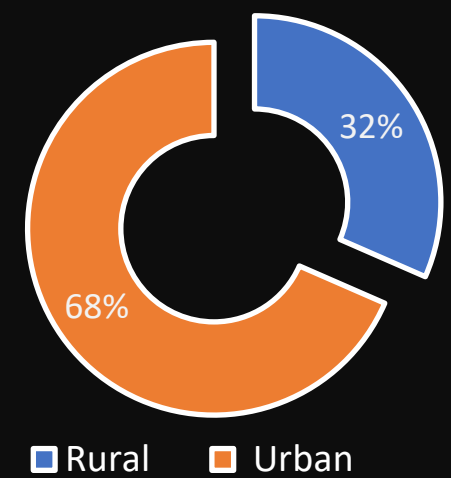


There is a similar proportion of sample value in the wealth-index of mother. All the wealth index categories have value 19%-22%



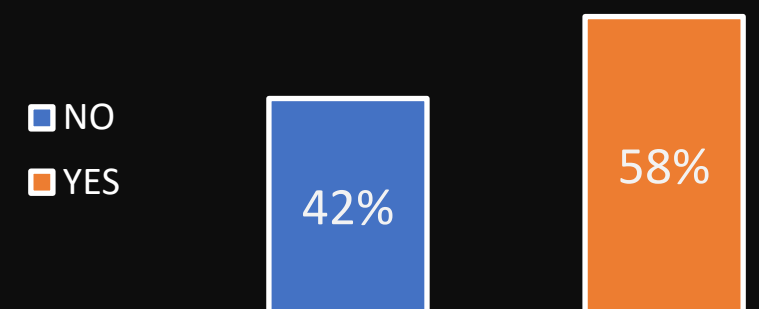
Result

More than double the total samples of mothers live in Urban areas than that of Rural areas (68% vs. 32%)



Currently breast-feeding mothers' proportion surplus, the of non-breastfeeding mother by a significant margin (58% vs. 42%)

Currently Breast Feeding?



Conclusion

It is verified that mother's education significantly increases breastfeeding minimizing the prevalence of child malnutrition in Bangladesh. Higher educated mothers have positive association and the rural mothers of poorer economic status have the most positive association with continuing breastfeeding up to 2 years. This will encourage policy makers to establish necessary steps in increasing breastfeeding practice. I strongly want to emphasize Performance-Based Incentives (PBIs) by providing rewards that are directly linked to better health outcomes for mothers and their newborns. Translating funding into better health requires many actions from community to the national level. If the government and stakeholder work collaboratively, this would bring on massive positive changes in strengthening the health system for a more improved tomorrow