

ABSTRACT

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1995

This study was carried out at the University Hospital of the West Indies between March and April 1995.

Knowledge, attitude and practices of women attending private and public antenatal clinics was looked at in relation to women attending public antenatal and post natal clinics.

A total of one hundred and eighty seven (187) women were interviewed, making use of a 29 item questionnaire developed for the purpose.

The results indicate that respondents in private clinics antenatal and post natal had lower knowledge scores about breast feeding compared with respondents in the public clinics. Both private and public clinics scored low in attitude to breast feeding.

A high prevalence of breast feeding was found in both private and public clinics, but accompanied by a pattern of early mixed feeding, and also a very low prevalence of exclusive breast feeding.

A relationship was found between education level and attendance. Respondents who attained higher levels of education and the professionals tended to attend private clinics. Employment status did not affect the attitude of respondents. Introduction of supplementary feeds was not

dependent on the age group of the mother, or the number of children she has.

The study points to a need to promote exclusive breast feeding.