



## Analysis of The Management of Early Breastfeeding Initiation in The Era of New Habits from The Mother's Side

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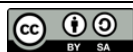
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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Early breastfeeding initiation is vital for newborn health, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has necessitated new health protocols. This study examines the management of early breastfeeding initiation from the mother's perspective, focusing on their knowledge and attitudes toward adherence to COVID-19 safety measures. **Methods:** A cross-sectional quantitative study was conducted with 109 mothers giving birth at midwives' independent practices in Bandar Lampung in 2023, using purposive sampling. Data were collected on maternal knowledge, attitudes, and compliance with COVID-19 protocols during early breastfeeding. Frequency distribution and Spearman Rank's Correlation were used for data analysis. **Results:** Out of 102 respondents, 91.7% demonstrated good knowledge about early breastfeeding initiation, and 90.8% had a positive attitude towards its management. Compliance with COVID-19 protocols was observed in 64.2% of the participants. The Spearman Rank's Correlation analysis showed a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant relationship between maternal knowledge and attitudes and the management of early breastfeeding. **Conclusion:** The findings suggest that better knowledge and positive attitudes among mothers are associated with greater adherence to COVID-19 protocols in early breastfeeding initiation. These factors are crucial for effective breastfeeding practices during the pandemic.



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## INTRODUCTION

Breast milk is God's gift to babies, which no food or drink can replace, and only breast milk can fulfill the baby's needs for optimal growth and development. Early Initiation of Breastfeeding (IMD) is the first step for successful exclusive breastfeeding for babies (Sudarmi et al., 2022). According to the Indonesian Ministry of Health Indonesia (2012), IMD is the process of breastfeeding a baby immediately after birth, where the baby is left to look for the mother's nipple (not guided to the nipple). According to Roesli (2012), IMD, or early initiation of breastfeeding, is when the baby begins to breastfeed on its own after birth, where the newborn is immediately dried and placed on the mother's stomach to have skin-to-skin contact with the mother for at least one hour. In this phase, the baby will crawl, looking for the mother's breast, before he manages to breastfeed.

In early 2020, based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, mothers diagnosed with COVID-19 should be separated from their babies to avoid the risk of neonatal infection (Amatya et al., 2020). This results in the IMD not being able to be implemented. In research by Deniz and Tezer (2022), it was reported that breast milk transmission from mothers with COVID-19 to their babies was 4.7%. Then, based on WHO (2020), recommendations close contact, IMD, and exclusive breastfeeding help babies to develop. For this reason, women with COVID-19 must be encouraged to breastfeed safely, have skin-to-skin contact, and provide care.

In November 2023, Covid-19 cases will increase again in several ASEAN countries, including Indonesia, with an average increase of 35-40 daily cases. As of December 6, 2023, the number of COVID-19 patients being treated in hospitals was between 60 and 131, with a death rate of 0 to 3 cases per day. With this increase, the Director General of Disease Prevention and Control of the Ministry of Health Indonesia advised that, even though they have undergone vaccination, the public still needs to implement health protocols such as wearing masks, maintaining distance, and washing hands with soap to provide optimal protection from Covid-19 transmission (Portal Informasi Indonesia, 2023).

Satuan Tugas Penanganan COVID-19 (2023) also stated that health protocols and vaccinations are still needed for the elderly, people who have comorbidities and are at high risk, such as pregnant women, and to date, the IMD management in the New Normal Era has not been officially revoked. The Indonesian Ministry of Health Indonesia's IMD Management (2020), IMD Management is based on a joint decision with the parents, provided that the parents have received counseling about the dangers and risks of transmitting COVID-19 from mother to baby, counseling about the benefits of IMD, during the mother's IMD Management You are required to wear a mask, wash your hands and clean your breasts before breastfeeding.

The management of IMD involves mothers and families, and based on the results of a pre-survey conducted at 10 TPMBs in Bandar Lampung, all TPMBs have implemented IMD, but 30% of TPMBs no longer carry out prior counseling regarding the dangers and transmission of Covid 19 from mother to baby. Before doing IMD, 50% of mothers did not use a mask when doing IMD, 30% of mothers did not wash their hands before doing IMD, and 20% of mothers did not clean their breasts before doing IMD. Based on this pre-survey, the author wants to conduct analytical research on managing Early Breastfeeding Initiation in the Era of Adaptation to New Habits from the Mother's Side.

## METHODS

This research is analytical, quantitative research with a cross-sectional design. The independent variable in this research is the Knowledge and Attitudes of Maternity Mothers. In contrast, the dependent variable is the management of IMD in the Era of Adaptation to New Habits.

The research was conducted in 2023. The locations of this research are all Independent Midwife Practice Places (TPMB) throughout Bandar Lampung City, where one TPMB representative was taken from each sub-district in Bandar Lampung. The population in this study was all mothers who gave birth normally and gave birth to normal and healthy babies in TPMB throughout Bandar Lampung City from April to October 2023, totaling 971 people. The number of samples taken after using the Slovin formula was 109 people with a sampling technique using purposive sampling.

The instruments used in this research were a questionnaire to measure the knowledge and attitudes of mothers giving birth and an observation sheet to see the management of IMD in the Era of Adaptation to New Habits. The instruments used are created based on aspects that are measured and based on theory. Validity and reliability testing was carried out on 30 respondents from TPMB in Bandar Lampung. In the validity and reliability test, it was found that  $p < 0.05$  and Cronbach's Alpha  $> 0.60$ , so the instrument used can be declared valid and reliable. The data processing uses frequency distribution and bivariate analysis with Spearman Rank's Correlation.

This research has received an ethical clearance from the health research ethics commission of the Poltekkes Kemenkes Tanjung Karang with number 269/KEPK-TJK//IV/2023.

## RESULTS

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that most respondents were in the healthy reproductive age range (20-35 years), with as many as 80 mothers (73.4%). In terms of educational characteristics, the majority of respondents had low education (SD-SMP), as many as 92 people (84.4%), while those with high education (SMA-College) were 17 mothers (15.6%). Meanwhile, regarding job characteristics, most respondents were housewives (not working), 76 people (69.7%).

**Table 1. Respondent Characteristics**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age</b>		
Healthy Reproduction	29	26.6
Unhealthy Reproduction	80	73.4
<b>Education</b>		
higher education	17	15.6
Low education	92	84.4
<b>Work</b>		
Work	33	30.3
Does not work	76	69.7
<b>Knowledge</b>		
Not good	9	8.3
Good	100	91.7
<b>Attitude</b>		
Negative	10	9.2
Positive	99	90.8
<b>Management of IMD</b>		
Not accordance	39	35.8
In accordance	70	64.2

Most respondents have good knowledge of IMD Management in the New Normal Era, namely 100 respondents (91.7%), and almost all respondents have a positive attitude towards IMD Management in the New Normal Era, 99 respondents. (90.8%). The majority of IMD management is by IMD management in the New Normal Era, namely 64.2% (70 respondents).

Table 2 show that based on Spearman's Rank Correlation test, a p-value of 0.000 is obtained, where  $< \alpha 0.05$ , which means there is a relationship between maternal knowledge and IMD management in the New Normal Era. Besides that it can be seen, the p-value is  $0.002 < \alpha 0.05$ , which means there is a relationship between maternal attitudes and IMD management in the New Normal Era.

**Table 2. Relationship between Knowledge Level and Attitudes towards IMD Management in the New Normal Era**

		Management		Tot	Spearman's Rank Correlation p-value
		Not accordance	In accordance		
Knowledge level	Not enough	8	1	9	0,000
	Good	31	69	100	
Attitude	Negative	8	2	10	0.002
	Positive	31	68	99	

## DISCUSSION

Based on the research results, it is known that the majority of respondents have a good level of knowledge regarding the implementation of IMD in the New Normal Era, namely 100 respondents (91.7%), a positive attitude towards IMD Management in the New Normal Era, namely 99 respondents (90.8%), and the majority of IMD management is by IMD management in the New Normal Era, 64.2% (70 respondents). Spearman's Rank Correlation test showed a relationship between knowledge and mothers' attitudes regarding IMD management in the era of new habits. This is based on the research results by [Palmquist et al. \(2022\)](#), where almost all (97%) respondents indicated the intention to provide exclusive breastfeeding to their babies in the first 6 months, even though the majority of breastfeeding respondents (66%) reported no change in the frequency of breastfeeding after the implementation of the stay at home order due to Covid-19.

In the research results of 9 respondents who needed better knowledge, eight respondents did not implement IMD by IMD management in the New Normal Era. This is in Bloom's theory, quoted by [Notoatmodjo \(2012\)](#), where the cognitive or knowledge domain greatly influences an individual's actions, independence, and responsibility in behavior. Therefore, good maternal knowledge about giving IMD will influence the management of IMD, and low knowledge about the benefits and goals of IMD can be a cause of IMD failure. This is also by research by [Ceulemans et al. \(2020\)](#), where beliefs and knowledge about the COVID-19 virus and community responses such as lockdowns affect obstetric and neonatal health, including aspects of medical counseling and social support. [Ickes et al. \(2023\)](#) also said that the COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges in promoting and maintaining exclusive breastfeeding, including changes in breastfeeding counseling before and after giving birth.

Likewise, with the attitude variable, of the ten respondents who had a negative attitude towards implementing IMD in the New Normal Era, eight respondents did not implement IMD by the IMD management in the New Normal Era. [Hamze et al. \(2019\)](#) stated that good maternal knowledge and positive attitudes are essential in breastfeeding. Therefore, the mother's knowledge of implementing IMD in the New Normal Era will influence the mother's attitude, ultimately affecting the management of IMD in the New Normal Era. For this reason, antenatal education, early postnatal education, and regular breastfeeding counseling are needed to improve mothers' attitudes and knowledge regarding breastfeeding practices ([Dukuzumuremyi et al., 2020](#)).

Green (2022 in [Notoatmodjo, 2010](#)) states that the level of education, knowledge, and attitudes are predisposing factors related to a person's behavior, where learning is necessary for determining a person's behavior. Behavior-based on knowledge, awareness, and a positive attitude will motivate mothers to make decisions, including managing IMD by Management in the New Normal Era. In this way, a mother will carry out IMD based on the knowledge she has received. At the same time, attitudes will arise because of the considerations they have obtained from the information or knowledge they have acquired. This is also by [Hamze et al. \(2019\)](#), who state that good maternal understanding and positive attitudes play an essential role in the breastfeeding process.

In this case, health workers have quite a unique role in implementing exclusive breastfeeding, starting with the provision of IMD, including the management of IMD in the New Normal Era. Health workers must be able to convince mothers to carry out IMD by complying with IMD procedures in the New Normal Era. Therefore, in her research, [Stacey et al. \(2022\)](#) stated that as frontline service providers, nurses and midwives play an essential role in providing support and education about the risks and benefits of breastfeeding for individuals with COVID-19. For this reason, every health worker must always follow developments in information related to health services to provide appropriate information to relevant patients/clients. Moreover, with the increase in COVID-19 cases since November 2023, the public is reminded to comply with the COVID-19 health protocol.

One of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on breastfeeding practices has been described by [Ickes et al. \(2023\)](#), who state that counseling regarding IMD and breastfeeding is less common than before the pandemic. Mothers stated that some health workers emphasized the immunological importance of IMD and breastfeeding. However, knowledge among mothers about the safety of IMD and breastfeeding in the context of COVID-19 still needs to be improved, and only a few reported such counseling materials. This resulted in mothers who had previous breastfeeding experience being less affected by barriers to breastfeeding counseling and mothers who were breastfeeding for the first time more often reporting stress and anxiety related to breastfeeding and parenting.

In the procedures for implementing IMD in the New Normal Era, IMD can be carried out preceded by counseling by health workers to mothers and families regarding the benefits of implementing IMD, the possibility of COVID-19 transmission from mother to baby, as well as the COVID Protocol that must be adhered to during the implementation of IMD to minimize the risk. The contagion. Ultimately, the mother and family decide whether to implement IMD and whether or not the COVID protocol is implemented in managing IMD in the New Normal Era. For this reason, starting from the implementation of counseling, health workers should provide counseling not only to the mother but also to those closest to the mother and her family and always facilitate good management of IMD so that the mother's positive attitude can be realized in real action

Even though the COVID-19 pandemic status has now been lifted, WHO and the government still ask the public to remain careful and adopt healthy lifestyle habits, especially for high-risk groups such as the elderly, pregnant women, and those with comorbidities. Tracing and administering vaccines are ongoing, and even the implementation of IMD is still recommended by the COVID-19 management. As stated by [van Goudoever et al. \(2022\)](#), adapting known protocols to suit post-COVID-19 restrictions plays an essential role in encouraging the implementation of IMD, including requirements during the process, such as hand hygiene and the use of masks.

Moreover, the increase in COVID-19 has occurred since November 2023. The government has again reminded the public to implement health protocols such as using masks, maintaining distance, and washing hands with soap to provide optimal protection from COVID-19 transmission ([Indonesian Information Portal, 2023](#)).

In this case, the role and communication between related health workers, such as midwives and birth mothers, is essential. Health workers are obliged to provide counseling and assistance necessary to maintain public health; for this reason, as explained by [Stacey et al. \(2022\)](#), health workers need to be aware of rapidly changing information and provide evidence-based information to families giving birth to children. It is hoped that by providing appropriate information regarding the management of IMD in the New Normal Era, mothers will have good knowledge and attitudes regarding the management of IMD in the New Normal Era so that the management of IMD in the New Normal Era can also run well as the first step to success in exclusive breastfeeding

## CONCLUSION

The research results show a relationship between the knowledge and attitudes of women giving birth and the suitability of implementing IMD with the COVID-19 Protocol in the New Normal Era in 2023. The limitation of this research is that at the time of data collection, there was a shift in the status of the COVID-19 pandemic has become endemic, so public awareness of health protocols has decreased without the public realizing that COVID-19 will not disappear from the face of the earth, and to overcome long-term COVID-19, we still have to prioritize health protocols and vaccinations. For this reason, good cooperation is needed between the birthing mother, family, and health workers, including midwives, so that IMD can consistently be implemented well without endangering the health of the mother and baby because IMD is an essential first step in creating successful exclusive breastfeeding.

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