OPEN PEER REVIEW

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Peer Review

Journal of Comprehensive Pediatrics
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Peer Review Report for "Exclusive Breast Feeding and Its Determinants in Infants Born in Zanjan Hospitals: A Longitudinal Study"

Author(s): Fariba Hadi, Hasan Eftkhar, Abolghassem Djazayery, Saeideh Mazloomzadeh

Review Timeline:

Submit Date:	2 Oct 2020
Revised Date:	17 Jun 2021
Accepted Date:	6 Jul 2021

Revision (0)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE : Reviewer

20 Nov 2020

Dear AE,
The article is very interesting and is potentially suitable for being published in the journal.
Two points should be considered before publication.
1. The topic of the article is not attractive and "neonates" should be changed to infants.
2. The method of study should be clarified. Case selection, excluding criteria...
3. Is it possible the all mothers answered the phone during these 6 months?!
Thanks.

REFEREE : Reviewer

20 May 2021

Dear AE,
I totally appreciate the efforts that have been done by the authors in conducting this interesting study. I saw the PDF file but I have many questions about this presentation:
- Citing references should be noted at the end of sentences ....(..).
Abstract:
- Line 8, methods section, “full-term at least 2500gr” change to “weight > 2500g”.
- Methods section was incomplete. Outcome measures should be defined, precisely.
- P value should be noticed in the results.
Background:
- Line 41-42 need rephrases. In paragraph 2 or 3, in addition to specific adverse health outcomes, including gastrointestinal and respiratory infections and die, you mention main another problem in neonate “jaundice”. Such as these sentences: “Early and adequate breastfeeding is effective in preventing neonatal jaundice. Inadequate breastfeeding is one of the major causes of neonatal jaundice”. You should be mentioned this new and valuable reference in the background and/or discussion section (Risk Factors of Early Breastfeeding Jaundice: How Can Gynecologists and Nurses be Effective in Reducing It?, J Compr Ped. 2020; 11(3):e103578. doi:10.5812/compreped.103578.)
Methods:
- Paragraph 2, line 2 (40%), need references.
- What are sampling methods? Randomization is not correct in such a study design. It seems to be a census. The study design of this study seems observational analytic and in main parts was qualitative.
- Inclusion and exclusion criteria were incomplete. Pl defines precisely and clearly.
- Inclusions and exclusions criteria must be mention in the first paragraph.
- Statistical Methods were incomplete. You have many non-categorical variables. You explain which parametric or non-parametric tests were used for which variables? Be defines precise and clear. Describe statistical methods in more detail, precisely. The methodology and statistical analyses of this study are not appropriate. You used OR, even in variables that were not significant!!. . At first, correlation testing should be used (two-tailed Pearson’s correlation coefficient analyses, or r) and if one variable was significant (relationships) then, use spearman test to find OR or HR. These variables could be analyzed with chi-square and T-test.
- You pointed adjust OR. Which variables adjusted?
- Several methodological mistakes further hamper the overall quality of the manuscript and the authors may consider reviewing the checklist in order to improve their manuscript.
Results:
- Paragraph 2, Line 103 and 121, results in section, beginning of sentences with number is not correct (86.6%...) (316)
- Title of table 3, mention at the top (no bottom).
- Results section was too long. Avoid repetitive sentences in the text that notice in tables.

- Contradictory results can be seen in tables and text. For example, you said: Five hundred and one (74.4%) parents were urban residents. The residential area of the parents was significantly associated with EBF. The risk of non-exclusive breastfeeding for infants whose parents lived in urban areas was almost two times greater than those whose parents were residing in rural areas. But table 2 showed that EBF was in urban 74.7% and 84.9% in rural and non-EBF was 25.3 and 15.1%, respectively. This discrepancy is due to the disproportion of the population in two groups (501urban as opposed to 172 rural). - We saw the selection and results in bias. It is not correct to compare two disparate groups. Minimize and control of confounders was performed in three ways: 1- a restriction of the study population, 2- matching the two comparison groups, and 3- stratifications of pooled data.
- Two groups of your study were not matching.
- Results and methods section need revision, totally.
Discussion:
- You had so many variables, but discuss only some of these. If authors studied many factors, then they should be discussed and analyzed one by one (similarities and contradictions with other studies).
References:
- The most of references were too old (33 references before 2010, almost before 2007). There have been only three references from 2012. References need renewal.
Thanks.

REFEREE : Associate Editor

24 May 2021

Dear EIC,
The manuscript is studied, and there are some comments which should be addressed by the author. According to the comments, the document needs major revision.
Kind regards,

REFEREE : EIC

26 May 2021

Dear Author,
The reviewers' comments are mentioned. Please correct the details as mentioned above carefully according to reviewers' request.
Thanks.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear Dr. Mohammad Reza Boloursaz,

Editor- in-Chief of Journal of Comprehensive Pediatrics,

We would like to thank the referee(s) for their valuable comments on our manuscript entitled "Exclusive Breast Feeding (EBF) and its Determinants in Neonates Born in Zanjan Hospitals - A Longitudinal Study" to the (ID Number: 108667). Here are our answers to the referee(s) comments', we made the required changes as were appropriate.

First reviewer's comments:

Reviewers' Comments:
Reviewer 1:
Dear author

The article is very interesting and is potentially suitable for being published in your journal.
Two points should be considered before publication.
1. The topic of article is not attractive and "neonates" should be changed to infants.

This was corrected in the title.

2. The method of study should be clarified. Case selection, excluding criteria...

This was corrected in the methods as follows:

All mothers visiting obstetrics gynecology departments of two main Hospitals (Mousavi and Imam Hossein) in Zanjan, between March and May 2009, were eligible. Mothers who were less than 14 years old and newborns who weighed <2500g, had a medical problem or needed special care were excluded.

3. Is it possible the all mothers answered the phone during this 6 months?!

This was corrected in the methods as follows:

Based on the calculated sample size, 700 mothers were selected by simple random sampling method and entered the study. Twenty seven mothers (21 due to immigration and 6 due to lack of cooperation) were lost during 6 months and data for 673 mothers were analyzed (3.9% loss to follow-up).

Reviewer 2:

I totally appreciate the efforts that have been done by the authors in conducting this interesting study. I saw PDF file but I have many questions about this presentation:

Citing references should be noted at the end of sentences ….(..). .

This was corrected in the manuscript.

Abstract:
Line 8, methods section, “full-term at least 2500gr” change to “weight > 2500g”.

This was corrected in the abstract.

Methods section was incomplete. Outcome measures should be defined, precisely.

This was corrected in the abstract as follows:

Information on the frequency of EBF up to 6 months, socio-demographic, reproductive and attitudes of mothers towards breastfeeding was gathered using questionnaires.

P value should be noticed in results.

This was corrected in the abstract.

Background:

Line 41-42 need rephrases.

This was corrected in the background.

In paragraph 2 or 3, in addition to specific adverse health outcomes, including gastrointestinal and respiratory infections and die, you mention the main another problem in neonate “jaundice”. Such as these sentences: “Early and adequate breastfeeding is effective in preventing neonatal jaundice. Inadequate breastfeeding is one of the major causes of neonatal jaundice”. You should be mentioned this new and valuable reference in background and/or discussion section (Risk Factors of Early Breastfeeding Jaundice: How Can Gynecologists and Nurses be Effective in Reducing It?, J Compr Ped. 2020 ; 11(3):e103578. doi:10.5812/compreped.103578.)

This was performed in the background.

Methods:
Paragraph 2, line 2 (40%), need references.

Reference number 22 was added in this line.

What is sampling methods? Randomization is not correct in such study design. It seems to be a census. Study design of this study seems observational analytic and in main parts was qualitative.

As the esteemed referee pointed out, this study is an observational study of cohort type and no randomization has been done in it. This study was performed on a single population and then according to the breastfeeding status of mothers at the end of the sixth month, was divided into two groups and the studied variables were compared between two groups.

Based on the calculated sample size, 700 mothers were selected using simple random sampling method and entered the study.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were incomplete. Pl defines precisely and clearly. Inclusions and exclusions criteria must be mention to first paragraph.

This was corrected in the methods as follows:

All mothers visiting obstetrics gynecology departments of two main Hospitals (Mousavi and Imam Hossein) in Zanjan, between March and May 2009, were eligible. Mothers who were less than 14 years old and newborns who weighed <2500g, had a medical problem or needed special care were excluded.

Statistical Methods were incomplete. You have many non-categorical variables. You explain which parametric or non-parametric tests were used for which variables? Be defines precise and clear. Describe statistical methods in more details, precisely.

All the variables we studied were qualitative (binary and categorical) and we did not have quantitative variables to compare with the parametric or non-parametric test. In univariate analysis, chi-square test or Fisher's Exact test was used for comparison.

Methodology and statistical analyses of this study is not appropriate. You used OR, even in variables that were not significant!!. . At first, correlation testing should be used (two-tailed Pearson’s correlation coefficient analyses, or r) and if one variables was significant (relationships) then, use spearman test to find OR or HR. These variables could be analysis with chi-square and T-test.

Given that the Pearson correlation test is used to examine the relationship between two quantitative variables and since all the variables we studied were qualitative and we did not have a quantitative variable, we used the Chi-square or Fisher's Exact test for comparison. To confirm the opinion of the esteemed referee, in tables 2 to 4, ORs were removed. All variables that were significantly associated with non-exclusive breastfeeding (P<0.05) and those with a p value less than 0.2 in the univariate analysis were included in multivariate model. Then, those variables that were significantly and independently associated with non-exclusive breastfeeding of the mother were shown in table 5.

You pointed adjust OR. Which variables adjusted?

All variables that were significantly associated with non-exclusive breastfeeding (P<0.05) and those with a p value less than 0.2 in the univariate analysis, were included in multivariate model. These variables include maternal age, maternal education level, maternal occupation, father occupation, parents' resident area, gravidity, parity interval, breastfeeding history, mother's decision to breastfeeding, type of delivery, mother and infant skin to skin contact, the interval between birth and EBF, pacifier use during the first six months of life and knowledge of mother on infant breastfeeding while away from her. After controlling the effect of these variables, the risk of non-exclusive breastfeeding was significantly and independently associated with parents' residential area, education of mother, the interval between parities, breastfeeding history, prior decision concerning breastfeeding and pacifier use during the first six months of life.

Several methodological mistakes further hamper the overall quality of the manuscript and the authors may consider reviewing checklist in order to improve their manuscript.

All these issues were corrected in the manuscript.

Results:
Paragraph 2, Line 103 and 121, results section, beginning of sentences with number is not correct (86.6%...) (316)

This was corrected in the results.

Title of table 3, mention at top (no bottom).

This was corrected in the *table 3*.

Results section was too long. Avoid repetitive sentences in the text that notice in tables.

This was corrected in the results.

Contradictory results can be seen in tables and text. For example you said: Five hundred and one (74.4%) parents were urban residents. The residential area of the parents was significantly associated with EBF. The risk of non-exclusive breastfeeding for infants whose parents lived in urban areas was almost two times greater than those whose parents were residing in rural areas. But in table 2 showed that EBF was in urban 74.7% and 84.9% in rural and non-EBF was 25.3 and 15.1%, respectively. This discrepancy is due to disproportion of the population in two groups (501urban as apposed 172 rural). We saw selection and results bias. It is not correct to compare two disparate groups. Minimize and control of confounders was performed in three ways: 1- restriction the study population, 2- matching the two comparison groups and 3- stratifications of pooled data.
Two groups of your study were not matching.
Results and methods section need revision, totally.

This study is in fact a descriptive cohort study that was performed on a single population and then according to the breastfeeding status of mothers at the end of the sixth month was divided into two groups and the studied variables were compared between two groups. Thus, from the beginning, we did not have two groups to be able to match confounders, but with using multivariate analysis, we tried to control the effect of confounding variables as much as possible.

Discussion:
You had so many variables, but discuss only some of these. If authors studied many factors, then they should be discussed and analyzed one by one (similarities and contradictions with others studies).

This was corrected in the discussion and highlited.

References:
The most of references were too old (33 references before 2010, almost before 2007). There have been only three references from 2012. References need renewal.

This was corrected in the references.

Associate Editor's Comments:
Associate Editor 1:
The manuscript needs major revision. Please revise the manuscript based on reviewers comments.

Our manuscript was revised based on reviewers comments.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

REFEREE : Reviewer

28 Jun 2021

Dear AE,
Although this topic has no point of novelty, after this revision I can consider this manuscript suitable for publication. The valuable and remarkable results could be used by health care providers. The method of study has been revised. The discussion part has changed in a good way. After native English revision, you can consider it for publishing.
Thanks.

REFEREE : Associate Editor

6 Jul 2021

Dear EIC
Based on the authors' answers to the reviewers' comments, the reviewer(s) have recommended publication.
Kind regards.

REFEREE : EIC

6 Jul 2021

Dear Author,
The document is reviewed carefully by the reviewers. According to their comments and your revisions as requested, this manuscript is accepted.
Thanks.