



Breastfeeding Care Implemented in a Midwifery Home

Hitomi Hikida (Toshiba Hospital)
Masuko Saito (Faculty of Nursing, Toho University)
Yoshiko Matsunaga (School of Nursing, Toho University)
Yuko Hoshino (Mejiro Birth House)

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Introduction

According to Japanese health authorities, 96% of Japanese mothers prefer breastfeeding. Establishment of maternal feeding is said to enhance a feeling of self-efficacy leading to successful childcare.

"The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding" by WHO/UNICEF recommends giving newborns no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated. However, breastfeeding is practiced by only 50% of Japanese mothers.

Meanwhile, 93% of mothers delivering in a midwifery home succeed in breastfeeding.

Objective

This study aimed to clarify how the **midwives in a midwifery home** are implementing care to establish breastfeeding.

Method

A participant-observer study was conducted on 5 midwives and mothers visiting a midwifery home in Tokyo from May to July 2012.

We observed midwives' activities at mother's class, prenatal check-ups, delivery and puerperium. Among observed conversations, behaviors, parturient reactions, medical records, etc., only those connected to breastfeeding care were extracted and described for the analysis conducted by categorizing such descriptions.

Results


Breastfeeding care provided by the midwives was aimed at thorough prior "physical preparation". Usually, they coached the pregnant women to not cool the body, to receive nutrients essential for maintaining physical conditions and to enhance circulation by facilitating mental and physical relaxation, leading to increased lactation.

To maintain good puerperal lactation, they attached importance to loss of general muscle tone, not focusing only on the breast.


They offered skilled care for which all five senses are used. Consequently, puerperal lactation was improved and almost all puerperant succeeded in breastfeeding on discharge from the midwifery home.

Conclusion

- 1) It is important that breastfeeding care in a midwifery home be initiated during pregnancy and that the midwives provide such care by carefully observing each pregnant woman's body in totality.
- 2) The importance of such prior physical preparation must be emphasized to hospital midwives to promote breastfeeding.



Scene of midwife examination in hospital



Scene of midwife examination in Midwifery Home