

## **Observations on 'Early Initiation of Breastfeeding' in Vadodara**

In India, almost **25 lakh (250,000)** of children under the age of 5 years die every year – 2/3 of these are under the age of one year. Malnutrition is directly or indirectly responsible for half of them <sup>1</sup>

The WHO/UNICEF joint statement in 1989 <sup>2</sup> recommended early initiation of breastfeeding (EIB) as one of the ten steps of protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding and the Government of India had set a target for EIB to be achieved at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> 5-year plan (2002-2007) <sup>3</sup>.

The theme of the **World Breastfeeding Week (August 1-7)** this year (2007) is very appropriately **'Breastfeeding: The 1<sup>st</sup> Hour – Save ONE MILLION babies'**. This study was undertaken to find out the EIB rate (initiation of breastfeeding within an hour of birth) in the major maternity hospitals of Vadodara and any variables significantly associated with EIB.

### **Material and Methods**

The maternity homes in Vadodara were listed in order of the annual deliveries and the top four were selected for the survey. Trained investigators visited these hospitals daily in the morning and interviewed every mother who had delivered on the previous day (by date). The information gathered was recorded on a pre-designed, computer-compatible proforma. The data collection was done from 26<sup>th</sup> February to 26<sup>th</sup> March. There were 764 deliveries during this period with 29 stillbirths. The sample comprises of the 735 live-borns.

The data was computerized and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) applying appropriate statistical methods.

### **Observations**

#### **Sample Profile**

Table I gives the detailed sample profile along with the frequency distribution of the timings of initiation of breastfeeding for each sub-group.

1. 82.8% mothers were in the age group of 20-29 years
2. 20.5% mothers were illiterate while 20.8% had passed H.S.C.
3. 7.6% (only) reported to be employed
4. 30.6% had a small family of 4 or less members
5. 28.2% families had per capita monthly income of Rs.300 or less (under poverty line) while it was Rs.1500 or more in only 8.2% families
6. 93.9% had 4 or more antenatal visits
7. 29.9% were not told about breastfeeding during the antenatal period.