

Utilization of Olive Oil as a Breast Care Medium to Support Breast Milk Flow for Mrs. N

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ABSTRACT

Low breast milk production is a major problem often experienced by new mothers, in addition to issues such as inverted or flat nipples, breast engorgement, babies refusing to breastfeed due to improper techniques, or infants with tongue-tie conditions. However, the most frequently reported issue is poor milk flow. A lack of awareness regarding proper breast care significantly contributes to this problem, resulting in suboptimal milk production. To overcome this, consistent breast care is necessary. One possible intervention is the use of olive oil as a medium to facilitate breast care. Objective: To determine the effect of breast care using olive oil on postpartum mothers. Research Method: This paper used a case study approach with a descriptive method and explanatory analysis techniques to determine the cause-and-effect relationship of breast care using olive oil. Various data collection techniques were employed, including observation, interviews, and documentation, involving Mrs. N, a 27-year-old postpartum mother on the 7th day after delivery, residing in Pasinggangan Village, Banyumas Regency. The intervention consisted of daily breast care using olive oil, applied once per day. The results showed an improvement in milk flow after the intervention. Based on these findings, routine breast care using olive oil can be considered a supportive method to enhance breast milk production in postpartum mothers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The postpartum period is a physiological phase experienced by all women following childbirth. During this period, complications may arise either directly or indirectly as a result of the birthing process. The postpartum period is defined as the time from the expulsion of the placenta until six weeks (or 42 days) after delivery. (Wulandari, 2018). During this phase, the maternal body undergoes significant physiological changes, one of which is the initiation of lactation. Lactation refers to the production and secretion of breast milk, stimulated by the hormones estrogen and progesterone, which activate the mammary glands. The practice of exclusive breastfeeding is recommended to ensure optimal nutritional intake for infants from birth up to six months of age. Breast milk contains colostrum, a nutrient-rich fluid high in antibodies and essential compounds such as proteins, which enhance immune function and possess antimicrobial properties. Consequently, exclusive breastfeeding has

been shown to reduce infant mortality rates. Nonetheless, challenges in exclusive breastfeeding may arise due to both internal and external factors. Internal factors include inadequate maternal knowledge and attitudes, while external factors encompass insufficient support from family, the community, healthcare professionals, and government institutions, as well as aggressive marketing of formula milk. (Ghanbari, 2012)

A common issue encountered by postpartum mothers is insufficient lactation, which can contribute to the failure of exclusive breastfeeding. In this context, midwives play a critical role in providing counseling, information, and education regarding breast care techniques, particularly in the first weeks postpartum, as a preventive measure against breast-related complications.

One preventive intervention to address lactation insufficiency is breast care using olive oil. This practice aims to enhance blood circulation and prevent obstruction of the milk ducts, thereby facilitating the smooth flow of breast milk. Tactile stimulation during breast care is known to activate the release of prolactin and oxytocin, hormones that are essential for effective milk production and ejection, ultimately supporting the infant's breastfeeding process. The study conducted by Handayani et al. (2024) explained the effect of oxytocin massage using olive oil on breast milk production in breastfeeding mothers. The results of the statistical test using the Paired T-test with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ showed a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference before and after oxytocin massage with olive oil on breast milk production in breastfeeding mothers. Oxytocin massage using olive oil can serve as an initial approach for breastfeeding mothers to increase breast milk production.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This paper used a case study approach with a descriptive method and explanatory analysis techniques to determine the cause-and-effect relationship of breast care using olive oil. Various data collection techniques were employed, including observation, interviews, and documentation. The research subject is Mrs. N, a 27-year-old woman on the 7th day of the postpartum period, residing in Pasinggangan Village, Banyumas Subdistrict, Banyumas Regency. The intervention involved breast care using olive oil, administered once daily starting from the 7th day postpartum as the first visit application. The second visit was conducted on the 10th day postpartum and continued until the 14th day postpartum. The intervention period was from February 5 to February 12, 2025. The patient was also advised to continue the intervention independently until the time of weaning. Evaluation of the intervention was carried out on February 13, 2025. Primary data were collected through interviews, while documentation and literature review were conducted to obtain secondary data.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

Primary data collection was conducted during the initial visit on February 5, 2025. For the subjective data, Mrs. N reported that she was currently on the 5th day of the postpartum period. Her obstetric history indicated that in 2019, she gave birth to a male infant weighing 3 kilograms. She had used the implant contraceptive method until the end of 2023. Mrs. N had no history of any illness. She complained that her breast milk secretion was not smooth. For the objective data, Mrs. N was found to be in good general condition, *compos mentis*, with a blood pressure of 120/80 mmHg, body weight of 65 kg, body temperature of 36.8°C, pulse of 89 beats per minute, and respiratory rate of 20 breaths per minute. No abnormalities were found on the general physical examination from head to toe. On focused examination, there were no signs of anemia or jaundice, and no edema or varicose veins. The uterine fundus was palpated three fingers below the umbilicus. The vaginal discharge was brownish, odorless, and the perineal sutures were healing well, dry, and without signs of infection. The midwifery care provided included: informing the mother about the examination findings, advising her to maintain personal hygiene, ensure adequate nutritional intake, and educating her to perform independent breast care using olive oil once daily for one week. The initial evaluation indicated that the mother was willing to try breast care in order to optimize milk production. During the second visit, Mrs. N stated that her breast milk production had slightly increased, and that she had been performing the breast care regularly for the past three days. She was advised to continue the breast care for a full week to maximize milk production. The final evaluation conducted on February 13, 2025, showed that Mrs. N's breast milk secretion had become smooth, and her milk production had increased, allowing her to begin storing expressed breast milk for her baby.

3.2 Discussion

The results of the study indicate that after Mrs. N performed breast care using olive oil once daily for one week, it helped to facilitate both the production and flow of breast milk. As a result, breast milk was optimally expressed, and the breasts felt firm and comfortable. Breast care is a method of directly demonstrating to postpartum mothers how to care for their breasts by stimulating the breast muscles to promote the smooth flow of breast milk. Her study also showed that the control group, which did not receive breast care, did not exhibit significant results. (Rahmatia, 2019). Olive oil-based breast care was found to be effective in improving breast

milk flow in postpartum mothers. In addition, regular breast care using olive oil can help keep the skin moisturized and hydrated. (Husnul, 2022).

The use of breast care with olive oil in postpartum mothers has a positive impact on the smooth secretion of breast milk. Olive oil, which has long been known for its high nutritional content, can offer additional benefits when used for breast care during the postpartum period. Breast care using olive oil is a natural approach that may enhance the efficiency of breast milk production and flow in postpartum mothers.

Olive oil is a natural substance rich in monounsaturated fatty acids, vitamin E, and antioxidants, all of which play vital roles in maintaining the health and moisture of the skin surrounding the breasts. In addition to providing essential nutrients, olive oil can act as a natural lubricant, helping to reduce the risk of skin irritation, especially in sensitive areas such as the nipples. Its high vitamin E content supports the regeneration of skin cells, maintains optimal moisture, and helps prevent cracking or chafing. Unlike many other oils, olive oil contains two major components: saponifiables and unsaponifiables. The saponifiable fraction, which makes up approximately 98% of the oil's composition, includes triacylglycerols, partial glycerides, fatty acid esters, free fatty acids, and phosphatides. Meanwhile, the unsaponifiable fraction, although only contributing 1–2%, offers significant benefits due to the presence of bioactive compounds such as tocopherols (vitamin E), phytosterols, natural pigments, and phenolic compounds, which act as natural antioxidants that promote skin health and tissue vitality. (Ghanbari, 2012).

Additionally, gentle breast massage using olive oil can help improve blood circulation in the breast area. This increased blood flow supports both the production and release of breast milk, thereby helping to meet the infant's nutritional needs and reducing the risk of milk duct blockage. Beyond its physiological benefits, the use of olive oil also provides a relaxing effect for postpartum mothers. The mild natural aroma of olive oil contributes to a calm and soothing atmosphere during breastfeeding, helping mothers feel more at ease and strengthening emotional bonding with their babies. By performing routine breast care with olive oil, postpartum mothers not only support the health and efficiency of milk expression, but also contribute positively to the overall well-being of their infants. This study has several limitations, including the use of only one sample, which makes the results unable to be generalized to a wider population. The case study approach used focuses on an in-depth understanding of a specific context, so the research findings highly depend on the particular conditions of the subject studied and have low external validity. In addition, the researcher's direct involvement in the data collection and analysis process may lead to subjective bias, whether consciously or unconsciously. The limitations of time and resources also made this study able to describe the phenomenon in only one case without comparing it to other potentially relevant cases.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted in accordance with the research objective, which was to determine the effect of breast care using olive oil on the smoothness of breast milk production in postpartum mothers, it can be concluded that breast care with olive oil has a positive effect on increasing blood circulation in the breast area, thereby helping to facilitate the process of breast milk production and secretion. In addition, gentle massage using olive oil also provides a relaxing effect for postpartum mothers, contributing to increased comfort and readiness for breastfeeding. Therefore, breast care using olive oil can be recommended as a natural and safe effort to support the smooth production of breast milk in postpartum mothers.

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