



## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Evaluating the Relationship Between Maternal Postpartum Depression, Infant Feeding Practices, and Infant Nutritional Status at a Maternity Hospital in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

Postpartum depression is a major maternal mental problem that has been shown to contribute to malnutrition in infants. This cross-sectional study explores the association between maternal postpartum depression (PPD) and infant feeding practices as well as infant nutritional status among infants aged 6-14 weeks at Eldoret West Maternity Hospital (EWMH) in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

The study involved 257 women of reproductive age with infants aged 6-14 weeks postpartum attending postnatal and maternal and child health clinics at EWMH. Data was collected using a modified Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) to screen for PPD and other questionnaires to gather sociodemographic information, feeding practices, and infant nutritional status. Multivariate logistic regression analyses were conducted to assess associations between maternal PPD, infant feeding practices, and nutritional status.

The prevalence of maternal PPD was 17.5%, with 1 in 6 mothers affected. Exclusive breastfeeding was practiced by 94.6% of mothers, exceeding the national level of 60%. Mothers with PPD were more likely to practice non-exclusive breastfeeding and were 1.4, 1.8 and 1.6 times more likely to have stunted, wasted and underweight infants respectively than mothers without PPD though the association was not statistically significant after adjusting for confounders.

Maternal PPD is prevalent among mothers at EWMH and is more likely to influence infant feeding practices particularly non-exclusive breastfeeding and nutritional status. Stunting, wasting and underweight were prevalent in infants of mothers with PPD.

These findings underscore the importance of integrating mental health and nutritional support services for mothers and infants in maternal healthcare settings. Early identification and intervention for maternal PPD can help improve infant feeding practices and nutritional outcomes, promoting the well-being of both mothers and their infants.

**Keywords:** maternal, postpartum depression, infants, malnutrition

