

QUANTIFYING DEVIATION FROM PRE-OPERATIVE FASTING GUIDELINES FOR ELECTIVE CAESAREAN SECTIONS AT MATER DEI HOSPITAL

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Introduction:

Prolonged preoperative fasting times may result in dehydration, hypoglycaemia, ketoacidosis and protracted recovery¹.

Method:

- Prospective audit.
- Identifying deviation from local Mater Dei Hospital (MDH) guidelines regarding pre-operative fasting times prior to elective Caesarean sections.
- Inclusion criteria: females above 18 years of age, who gave birth between September 2021 and December 2021.
- Data collected through patient interviews using a standard questionnaire.
- Data regarding time of induction was collected from anaesthetic sheets and obstetric operating theatre records.
- Microsoft Excel® was used to input and analyse data.

Results:

Data collected from **135 participants** shows that:

- Patients last ate a **mean of 13.2 hours** prior to elective C-section versus a **mean of 11.6 hours** for last having clear fluids.
- Mothers fasted **x2.2 longer** than required time of **6 hours for solid food**, and **x5.8 longer** the required time of **2 hours for clear fluids**, (Figure 1).
- Majority of patients were instructed to stop both eating and drinking at **midnight**, at **99.3%** and **98.5%** respectively.
- Earliest recorded time of induction of anaesthesia was **8.30am**, seen for **3% of patients**.
- Mothers were instructed by healthcare professionals to stop eating solids for a **mean of 10.3 hours**, from midnight to time of induction, compared to 6 hours as per guideline. Thus mothers were instructed to fast **x1.7 longer** than standard, (Figure 1).
- Mothers were **instructed** by healthcare professionals to stop drinking clear fluids for a **mean of 10.2 hours** from midnight to time of induction, compared to 2 hours as per guideline. Thus mothers were instructed to fast **x5.1 longer** than standard, (Figure 1).
- **92.6%** of patients would have preferred to be given the **option** to keep drinking clear fluids for up to 2 hours before the C-section, (Figure 2).
- **81.5%** of mothers would have taken clear fluids up to 2 hours before the C-section had they been appropriately informed, (Figure 2).

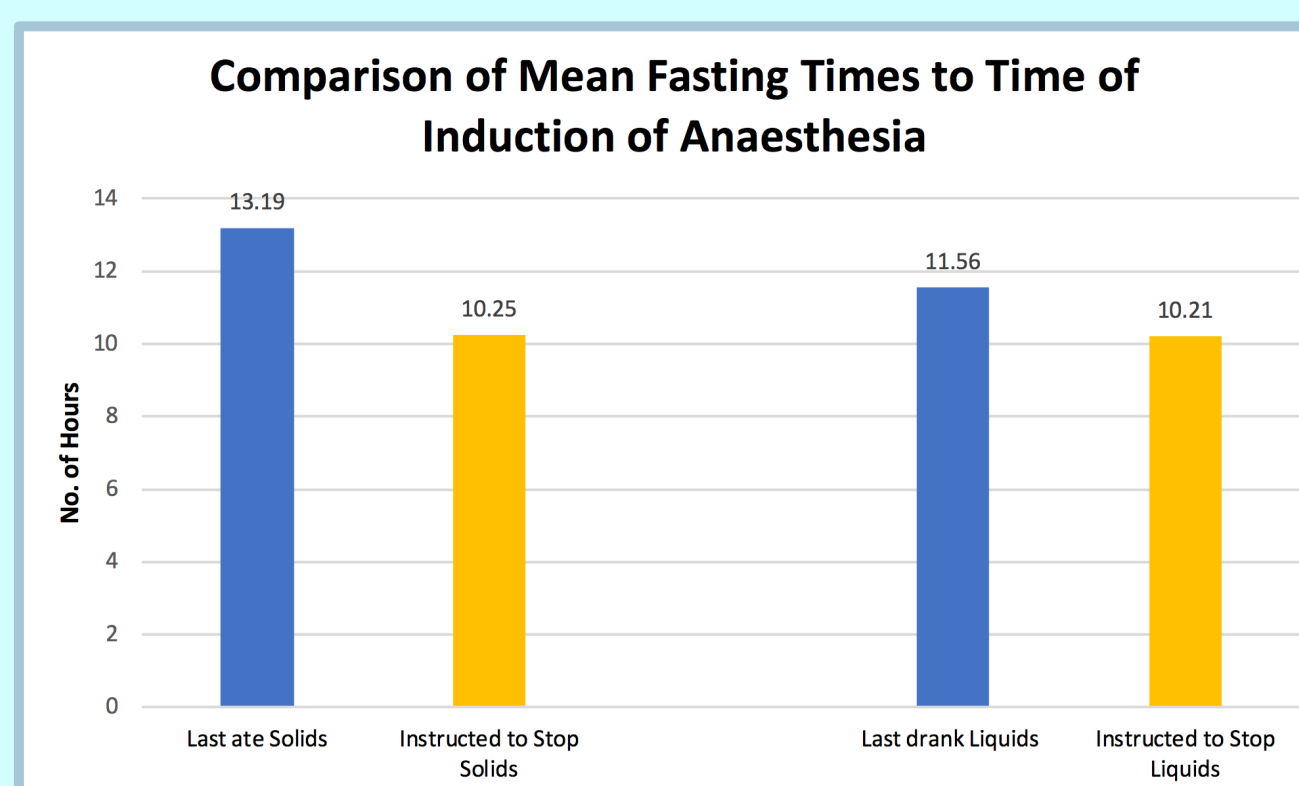


Figure 1. Comparison of Mean Fasting Times to Time of Induction of Anaesthesia

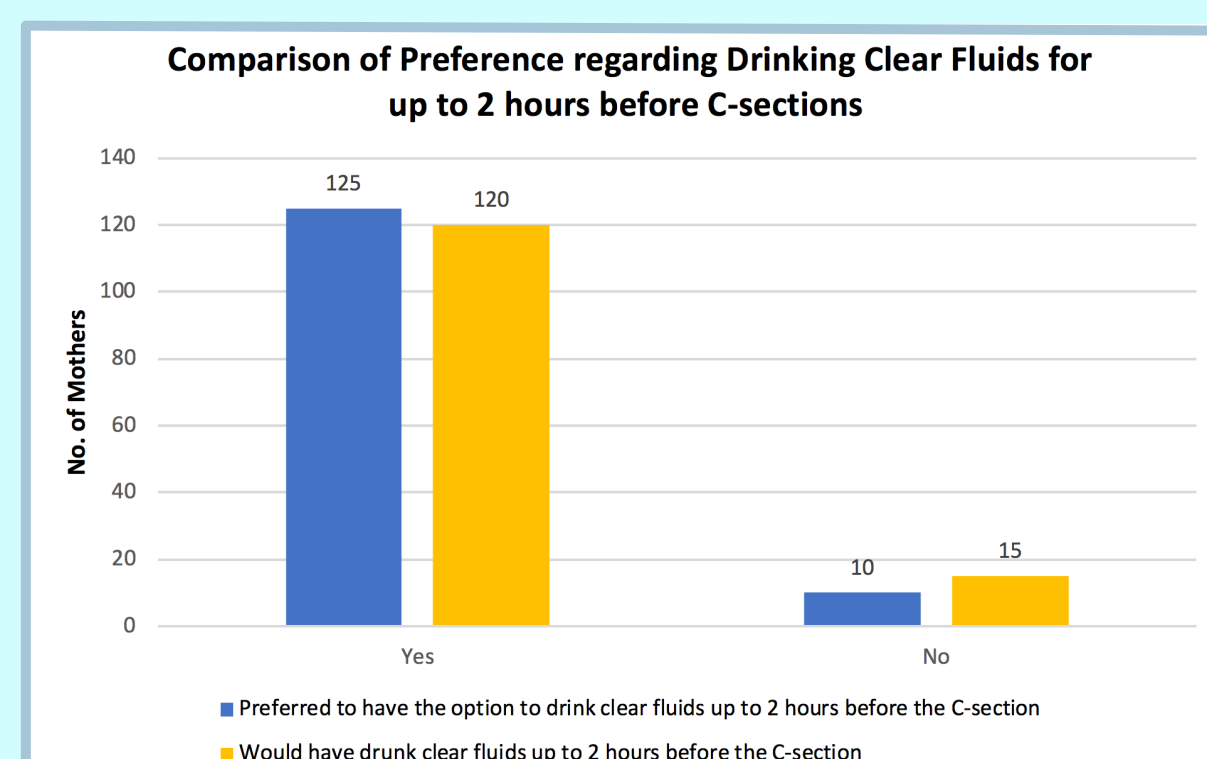


Figure 2. Comparison of Preference regarding drinking Clear Fluids for up to 2 hours before C-sections



Recommendations:

1. **Fasting times** can be **reduced** for both solids and liquids, with particular emphasis to liquids. Patients are admitted to general obstetric wards accommodating pre- and post-partum mothers and their newborns, possibly even sharing rooms. This results in frequent disturbances throughout the night and pre-operative mothers who wake up should be allowed to drink water after midnight up until two hours of the first scheduled time slot for elective C-sections.
2. **Better reinforcement** of the Mater Dei Hospital pre-operative fasting guideline with respect to stopping intake of clear fluids/water from 5.30am onwards of the day of procedure instead of midnight is therefore required.
3. Implementing the above is a change which the majority of patients agree with and thus would also **improve patient satisfaction**.

REFERENCES:

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2. DEPARTMENT OF ANAESTHESIA AND CRITICAL CARE, MATER DEI HOSPITAL. (2009). GUIDELINE FOR PRE-OPERATIVE FASTING, V01.0.