

Feeding and Weaning Practices among Children (6-30 Months) In District Ganderbal

¹khushnuma Amin, ²Fayaz Ahmad Wani, ³. Kousar Parveen,
(Post Graduate student of Kashmir University, Institute of Home Science)
(Post Graduate student, IGNOU)
(Dietician, Sheri-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences)

Abstract:

Objective: The study was carried out with the aim to assess infant feeding and weaning practices among children (6-30 months) in district Ganderbal.

Materials and Methods: The present investigation comprised 60 children (36 rural and 24 urban) 31 males & 29 females. The main tool for the collection of data was questionnaire cum interview. The questionnaire was framed in simple language so that the respondents could answer easily.

Results: The study revealed that 83.4% rural mothers were giving breast milk as a per lacteal feed while as in contrast to it 37.5% urban mothers fed their babies with either water or honey, sugar, etc. Maximum 83.4% rural and 62.5% urban mothers immediately feed their babies after birth, which also increase successful breast feeding. Most of the mothers were not aware about cleanliness and they do not clean their breast before feeding.

Conclusion: Breast feeding was universal practice in women. Some mothers were advised by doctors to feed colostrum to their babies, some mothers were having self-knowledge about the importance of colostrum and some infants were fed colostrum without knowing its importance.

Keywords: breast-feeding, infants, weaning, mother's.

I. Introduction:

Infants are remarkable creatures. Just as remarkable is the extent of their growth and development during the first year of life. It is during infancy that the baby needs much attention to be paid to grow physically, mentally and emotionally. Much stress is paid on the feeding practices of the infant during the first year of its age, which reflects at the later stage. If the infant is fed properly then only all-round development will take place. Improper feeding and under feeding will lead to malnutrition.

Mother's milk is nature's best gift to a new born baby. It is the dream of every mother that her baby should be healthy and happy. To fulfill this dream a mother should have an understanding of the nutritional requirements of the child. The child's nutritional requirements per unit of body weight are greater during infancy than at any other stage of life. A desirable and progressive increase in the infant's weight depends to a large extent on adequate nutrition i.e. on feeding.

If the baby is properly fed he gains weight at the rate of half kg(1/2 kg) per month during the first three months. Thereafter, he gains at the rate of 1/4th kg per month. By the end of the sixth month the baby doubles his birth weight.

World Alliance for Breast Action (WABA) has designated August 1-7 as world breast –feeding week. WABA is a network of organization and individuals in collaboration with the WHO and UNICEF who work to protect, promote and support breast feeding as a natural as inherent right of all new born babies and mothers.

Understand the importance of it, "breast milk is an operation at KEM Hospital, Mumbai for infants who cannot get their mother's milk". Keeping in view the importance of breast feeding and weaning the present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- 1 To study the feeding practices among mothers.
- 2 To determine the age at which babies are weaned.

II. Materials and Methods:

The study was conducted in district Ganderbal. Before conducting the study information was gathered on the total number of women having their in the age group of 6-30 months. Since it was not possible to conduct door to door survey, it was decided that sample will be collected from mothers attending PHC Gundire and Al-Qadir pharmacy Harran, one of the reputed pediatrician clinic in Ganderbal. The mothers were interviewed personally and the tool used for data collection was interview cum questionnaire. The data was then tabulated and represented through various tables and evaluated statistically.

III. Results:

The study reveals that breast feeding is generally practiced by the mothers in the valley. 41.67% rural and 29.16% urban mothers stop breast feeding the reason behind this was some of the mothers did not have sufficient supply of milk, while others were holding some jobs and being out of their houses for most of the time and could not breast-feed their babies on demand. Both rural and urban mothers were quite aware regarding the age of introducing supplementary foods, 91.67% rural mothers gave cow's milk as supplementary milk feed to their children in comparison to urban 58.33% mothers gave tinned milk to their children due to its availability.

The study further reveals that majority 58.33% rural and 70.83% urban children were weaned between the age group of 5-8 months, it was seen that the rural mothers are ignorant about the proper age of weaning and they prepared the weaning foods at home. But in urban areas prescribed and approved preparations are available in order to wean their children.

IV. Discussion:

Socio-economic status of the sample population with respect to type of family, family size, educational status of parents, occupational pattern and family income was assessed. Out of the total sample surveyed 60% belonged to nuclear family and rest belong to joint family. According to Kumta (1992) in a nuclear family, not only has the mother no chance to see another female relative exclusively breast feeding her baby but she also does not get the mother's support which is available in a joint family. Hospital practices nowadays are also frequently not conducive to breast-feeding and are infant detrimental to it. ⁽³⁰⁾ 70% of fathers and 30% mothers were literate and some of them were having good qualification like graduate and post graduates. Maximum 50% were Government employees while 80% mothers were house wives. Majority of the children 76.5% belonged to the families whose income per month ranges between 6000-9000 and only 23.5% children belonged to families whose income per month was above Rs 9000. According to Singhanian et al. (1990) report that in educated mother's from upper socio-economic status in Kolkata, initiation of breast-feeding is delayed by more than 24 hours by 68.3% of mothers, 83% introduced bottle-feeding in the first month of life, poor bottle hygiene was seen in 54% cases and compared with Rao and Rajpathak study in 1992 it was observed that in a slum area adjacent to Pune (Maharashtra) that artificial feeding was a rule in L.S.E (lower socio-economic class) exclusive breast-feeding was not continued beyond 4 months of age among H.S.E.class and 55% infants received supplementation even before 4 months of age ($P<0.01$). By the age of 12 months, 71% infants were fully weaned. Contrary to this, for 24% of infants in L.S.E class exclusive breast feeding continued well beyond 6 months of age and only 60% infants were fully weaned at the age of 12months. ⁽⁵²⁾

Breast milk contains all essential nutrients needed for the infant. It provides the best nutrition and protects the infant from infections. It is considered as a natural food and is easily digested and absorbed by the infant as compared to formula milk prepared from other sources. In present study breast feeding was the universal practice in all Kashmiri women. In Gandotra et-al., (1990) study in a rural area of Jammu and Kashmir reported that breast-feeding was considered by 94.8% of the women but only 64% of the women thought it to be the best feed, 65.7% of the mothers knew that breast-milk is sufficient for the child up to over 6 months. ⁽⁴⁷⁾ Majority 83.4% rural mothers reported breast feeding their infants. 75% rural infants were fed with prelacteal feed within <3 hours whereas 66.79% urban infants were fed with prelacteal feed within 3-6 hours after birth. Ray and Reddy (1998) conducted a study in an urban slum of Varanasi and found that breast-feeding was started by 85% on the third day, 10% on the second day and by 1.7% on the 4th day. The average total duration of breast feeding in this community was 16.85+ 7.8 months. However, 41.7% of mothers breast fed their children even after the age of 18 months and 28.3% of mothers stopped breast-feeding before the first birthday.

Among the surveyed population 52.78% rural and 50% urban mothers were advised by doctors and rest were knowledgeable to feed colostrum to their babies. Maximum 83% rural and 62.5% urban mothers immediately feed their babies after birth, which also increase successful breast feeding. 41% rural mothers stop breast feeding because of any other reason besides insufficient breast milk, next pregnancy etc and 29% urban mothers stop because of next pregnancy or working condition. In rural areas maximum infants were given feed whenever they demanded, as their mothers were always available to them. In comparison to it maximum 58% infants were on fixed feeding because their mothers are working and they are not always available to feed them. Investigations have been undertaken to study whether employed women breast fed less than non employed women. The result has so far been inclusive (WHO 1979; Marchione and Helsing 1981. (38,39)

Weaning is a well-known fact that breast milk alone is not sufficient for an infant after the age of six months as there is rapid rate of growth, hence need for nutrients increases. So it is important to start weaning at the age of 5-6 months in adequate amounts and hygienic matter. In this study 58% rural and 70% urban children were weaned between the age group of 5-8 months. According to Betsy Foxman, journal of human lactation 2003, reported weaning practices among 222 breast-feeding mothers who weaned their babies 6 months postpartum. After initiating weaning, one fourth of the participants weaned within 2 days and three fourth by 14 days (range 0-90 days). Shorter weaning duration was associated with earlier ages at weaning.

V. Conclusion

It may be concluded that breast feeding is generally practiced by the mothers in the valley. Artificial feeding was resorted only under compulsion because some of the mothers did not have sufficient supply of milk, while others were holding some jobs and being out of their houses for most of the time and could not breast-feed their babies on demand. Both rural and urban mothers were quite aware regarding the age of introducing supplementary foods.

References:

- [1]. Ritchey, S.j Taper, J.L (1983) maternal and child Nutrition, PP 213 Harper and Row publishers, New York.
- [2]. Shatrunga Vecena, (1982) Breast feeding is best nutrition, vol. 16 , No.2, 2-3.
- [3]. Roy, G. Reddy, D.C.S. some aspects of breast-feeding and weaning practices in urban slum community. India, J. public health XXXII (4); 207-208 (4) 1988.
- [4]. Gandotra, V.k.sethi, N. and Rishma G.A study of breast-feeding in rural women. Health and population perspectives and issues 13 (1) and (2); 12-20 (1990).
- [5]. Singhanian, R.U.Kabr, S.K and Bansal, A. Infant-feeding practices in educated mothers from upper socio-economic status. India. Paediatr; 27;591-593 (1990).
- [6]. Sinha.A. and kumar, A.R. infant growth in relation to feeding Practices in low income families. India. Paediatr., 28 (1); 57-64 (1991).
- [7]. Rao , S. and Rajpathak, V. Breast-feeding and weaning practices in relation to nutritional status of infants. India. Paediatr., 58; 349-356
- [8]. Gopalan, C., Ramasastri, B V. and Balasubramaniam,1991, nutritive value of Indian foods. National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad.
- [9]. Rajalashmi ,R. 1974 , Applied Nutrition Oxford and IBM publishing co., New Delhi.
- [10]. Robinson, C.H. , M . R . Lawer, Normal and therapeutic nutrition, 1982, oxford and IBM publishing co., New Delhi.
- [11]. Anita , F. P ., 1986 , clinical dietetics and nutrition oxford university, press Bombay.
- [12]. Kalra . A . Kalra, K . and Dayal, R . S Breast-feeding practices in different residential economic and educational groups . india. Paediatr . , 19 (5); 419-425 (1982).
- [13]. WHO (1974) , Handbook on human nutritional requirements. WHO Monograph series No.61. WHO, Geneva.
- [14]. Helsing , E (1975), Women's liberation and breast-feeding , J . trop. Paediat 21, 290-2. (1976). Lactation education; the learning of the 'obvious' (IBA Symposium 45, 215-30).
- [15]. Goplan, C. Nutrition problems and programmers in South-East Asia. WHO, 51-52 (1987).