

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Mother's Regarding Weaning in Rural Community of Lahore

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ABSTRACT

Background: Birth of a child is of great importance in a family. Child health depends upon the fulfillment of nutritional needs that includes breast feeding and weaning. Weaning is the beginning of semisolid food in infant's diet who is consuming milk to meet his nutritional needs. Breast milk is a good source of nutrition for the first six months of child's life, but then again weaning is also essential as the child is in the growing stage.

Methods: Descriptive analytical design was used in this study. The study was conducted in the area of Mohnalwal Lahore. All mothers in the reproductive age group 18-49 year were the source population. Data was collected through the administration of self-administered close ended questionnaire. Regression analysis through SPSS was applied to find out the association between variables.

Results: The Majority (85.7%) of the mother's of the community were educated and only 14.3% of mothers had no formal education. 81.9% of the husbands were educated whereas 18% had no formal education. The main source of this knowledge was friends and family with 27.8% and Health worker / Hospitals with 21.8% whereas, 16.5% of the mother's had knowledge of weaning from TV and media and only 7 mothers had the knowledge of weaning

Conclusions: Majority of the mothers had knowledge about weaning and was practicing correct weaning practices. Majority of the mothers started weaning at the recommended age of 4 to 6 months and the commonly used weaning diet was rice , rusk / biscuits or mashed fruits / veg. most of the mothers of Mohnalwal show a positive attitude towards weaning.

Keywords: Weaning, Practices, Community, Infants.

INTRODUCTION

The health of the child depends upon the fulfillment of nutritional necessities that includes breast feeding and weaning. Weaning is the introduction of semisolid diet for an infant who is consuming milk to meet the nutritional needs¹. The word weaning is originated from the Anglo-Saxon word "wenian" meaning "to become adapted to something different". It is a complex process that combines nutritional, biochemical and the mental adjustments. Weaning starts when an infant is gradually given semisolid foods. The very first introduction of food other than breast milk is the complementary feed that the infant needs to compensate for his nutritional needs². WHO and UNICEF have recommend that an infant should be given adequate weaning for the first 2 years of life as an appropriate and safe means of protecting children from infection and become a source of essential nutrients needed for the growing bodies³. Mother's knowledge about the nutritional requirements of the child places an important part in the way food is given to the child. Research shows that mothers' education regarding the ideal child feeding practices include absolute breastfeeding for six months and the proper transition to semisolid food⁴. In Ethiopia, 57% deaths of children under five years of age are closely related due to lack of proper weaning knowledge⁵. Feeding practice have a lot of implication for the nutritional status of the child. Understanding the social beliefs, knowledge, attitude and practices about complementary feeding among mothers is an important step prior to designing an interventional strategy to prevent the hazards that are

caused by lack of weaning education⁶. In Pakistan, a study was conducted regarding the practice and perception of mother in case of weaning, findings showed that perceptions and practices of weaning are poor and insufficient in regards to time of start of weaning, age-proper amount, quality and recurrence of weaning⁷. The times are changing and the need for the upcoming society's attitudes is important to establish best practices. Weaning knowledge is important for the mothers to cope up with the advance threat of diseases that their infant can be exposed to if they neglect the dietary pattern of child.

The aim of this study was to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of mothers regarding weaning diet.

Research questions:

Research Question 1- What is the knowledge of community mothers regarding weaning diet.

Research Question 2- What is the attitude of community mothers regarding weaning diet.

Research Question 3- What are the practices of community mothers regarding weaning diet.

Significance of the study: The growth and development of child is important as it is associated with mental and social development. It is necessary for community mothers. The starting time of weaning is very important for infants' wellbeing. The present study would help establish basis for the education of mothers regarding the weaning diet which would eventually help decrease the infant's mortality and morbidity rate in the community. The research is significant because it contributes for knowledge development, and practical improvement. The research plays an important role in shaping the institution and for its development, and it is essential to have knowledge-driven growth for better learning.

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METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the area of Mohnalwal Lahore. Descriptive analytical design was used in this study. It gives an overview of knowledge, attitude and practices of community mothers regarding weaning diet. All mothers in the reproductive age group 18-49 year were the source population. The sampling was done using the convenient sampling technique. The data collection instruments used was adopted¹⁶ which consists of different parts like socio-demographic variables, mother's knowledge, attitude and practices towards weaning diet. The data was collected through house to house visit. Mothers were educated about the purpose and procedure of the study and data was collected from only willing participants. *The data analyzed using the SPSS version 24 and regression analysis test is used for association.*

Before the fieldwork ethical clearance was obtained from community mothers. Response of mothers was anonymous and data collectors informed to the mothers that they had full right to discontinue or refuse to participation in the study. A letter of agreement was also attached with the questioner to obtain the permission of each mother.

RESULTS

The results section contains the outcomes of this study. A total of 133 mothers were interviewed and the response rate was 100%. The age of mothers ranges from 20 to 40 years. Whereas 45.9% mothers between the range of 30 to 34 years. The results indicated that 29.3% of children's age lie between 14 to 18 months whereas 27.1% of children are approx of 2 years of age. The Majority (85.7%) of the mother's of the community were educated and only 14.3% of mothers had no formal education.

According to table 2 shows that 71.4% of the mothers had weaning education. Only 38 (28.6%) mothers had no knowledge of weaning their children. The main source of this knowledge was friends and family with 27.8% and Health worker / Hospitals with 21.8% whereas, 16.5% of the mother's had knowledge of weaning from TV and media and only 7 mothers had the knowledge of weaning in school as they range between 20 to 24 years of age.

Table 3 shows that attitude of mothers towards weaning was not enough, 46.6% of the mother's agree whereas 39.9% of the mothers disagree and 13.5% of the mothers were not sure about introducing weaning before the age of 4 months. 85.9% of the mothers disagree with the fact that child should not be breastfed along with weaning as weaning alone is enough for the child whereas 10.5% of the mothers agree and 13.5% of the mothers were not sure whether to wean alone or to wean along with breastfeeding. More than 47% of the mothers agree on giving the weaning once as 43% of the mothers have the

practice of weaning the child twice or thrice and only 9% of the mothers think that weaning should be given more than three times a day to a healthy baby.

Fig. 1 How many times weaning is given?

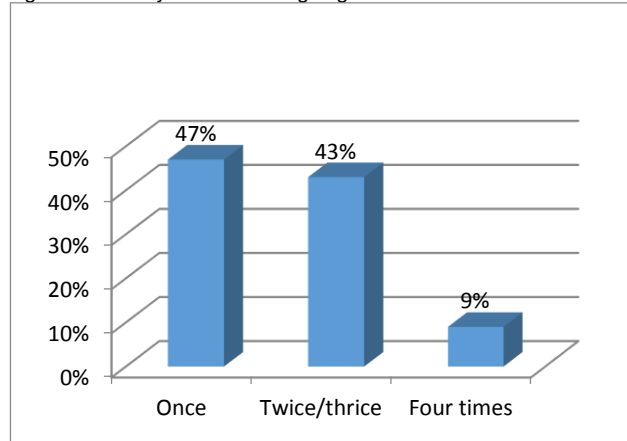


Table 1. Demographic Data

	Frequency	%age
Mother's ages		
20-24	21	15.8
25-29	30	22.6
30-34	61	45.9
35-40	21	15.8
Number of children		
1-2	64	48.1
3-4	49	36.8
5-6	19	14.3
7-8	1	.8
Mother's education		
Primary	29	21.8
Secondary	49	36.8
College/University	36	27.1
No Formal Education	19	14.3
Husband's education		
Primary	26	19.5
Secondary	40	30.1
College/University	43	32.3
No Formal Education	24	18.0

Table 2: Weaning Knowledge and Source of Information

	Frequency	%age
Education regarding weaning		
No	38	28.6
Yes	95	71.4
Source of Information		
School	7	5.3
Friends & Family	37	27.8
Hospital / Health Worker	29	21.8
T.V / Media	22	16.5

Table 3. Attitude of Mothers toward Weaning

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Should weaning be introduced before 4 months	9.8	36.8	13.5	37.6	2.3
Breast feeding is not necessary as weaning is enough	0.0	10.5	13.5	51.1	24.8
It is fashionable to give bottle milk when you go out	5.3	30.8	15.0	35.3	13.5
Infant should be breastfed only twice because he will not be interested in weaning	4.5	26.3	18	37.6	13.5
Prolong Breast feeding makes breasts ugly	7.5	9	27.1	33.8	22.6

Weaning practices

Relationship between demographic variables and Knowledge of Weaning: Cross tabulation of demographic variables such as mother's age, No. of children, type of family, mother's education and household income between knowledge of mothers regarding the time at which to start weaning. The respondents are grouped in two i.e. one who gave the answer that weaning should be commenced 4 to 6 and other who gave early or late. Results show no significant relation between mother's age, No. of children and family structure ($X^2=4.944$, $p>0.05$; $X^2=3.925$, $p>0.05$; $X^2=6.164$, $p>0.05$) and knowledge of the time to wean the infant whereas mother's education and household income have a significant relationship the knowledge of weaning ($X^2=17.969$, $p<0.05$; $X^2=28.339$, $p<0.05$).

DISCUSSION

The finding of this study depict that majority of the respondents (53.4%) knew that weaning should be initiated by the age of 4-6 months. 40.6% mothers preferred cow's milk for weaning. Majority of the mothers had knowledge about weaning diet and were practicing correct weaning practices. Majority of the mothers started weaning at the recommended age of 4 months to 6 months.

The study conducted in Jinnah Hospital Lahore¹⁷ showed that 79.6% mothers exclusively breastfed their babies and 84% continued breast feeding along with complementary feeding. The correct knowledge of initiation of complementary feeding was found in 54% of mothers but it was practiced by only 43%. Results are also supported by study¹⁸ that the attitude towards weaning is an important process of introducing new food to the child at a proper age. If it is done in a proper way by using proper food and practices, then it becomes a helpful for the child.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions have been made that majority of the mothers had knowledge about weaning and were practicing correct weaning practices. Majority of the mothers started weaning at the recommended age of 4 to 6 months and the commonly used weaning diet was rice, rusk / biscuits or mashed fruits / vegetables.

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