

The Level of Knowledge of Lactating Mother's Regarding Weaning in Selected Community Areas of Kashmir

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Abstract: ***Background:** At six months of age weaning is needed from that age because breast milk or infant formula alone are not enough to cover the infant's energy needs or provide sufficient amounts of certain nutrients as protein, zinc, iron and fat-soluble vitamins¹. **Aim of The Study:** to assess mother's knowledge regarding weaning practice at community areas of Anantnag Kashmir were randomly selected, and data collected were tabulated, analyzed with multiple linear regression and percentage test using SPSS Software using 16.0 version. The children are at risk for various health problems. Even they had borne with average birth weight. The morbidity and mortality rates in children are high they need optimal care for improved survival. Health of the rowing child is always a matter of great concern to the parents. Physical health is important because it is associated with mental ad social development². Good nutrition is very important to promote good physical health of the child in order to build up health life. Nutritional status of infant will be based on breast feeding and weaning practice. All children should have the basic nutrition they need to learn and grow and to pursue their dreams, because in the end, nothing is more important than the health and well-being of our children³. Children in India face health issues and are afflicted by illnesses and disorders. There are a variety of factors that contribute to these issues. It is the parents' primary obligation to ensure that their children receive good nourishment and education and that the home environment is created in such a way that it promotes the health and well-being of the children in an acceptable manner⁴. The causes of health problems, the prevalence of childhood health problems, child health interventions, and strategies to avoid health problems among children are the key topics covered in this study paper. It is critical that individuals from deprived, marginalized, and socioeconomically backward areas of society raise awareness about these initiatives. Individuals of all classifications, backgrounds, and occupations must be aware of health issues affecting children and how to address them effectively. **Results:** The analysis reveals that 58(58%) mothers of infants have inadequate knowledge; 32(32%) have moderate knowledge; 10 (10%) have adequate knowledge. There is a significant association found between the "educational status, occupation, type of family and no. of children" with knowledge. **Conclusion:** The study findings conclude that majority of lactating mothers of infants 58(58%) have inadequate knowledge. The nurse administrator should plan to conduct health education programs in community to initiate healthy weaning practices.*

Keywords: knowledge, lactating mothers, weaning

1. Introduction

Weaning is a gradual process of introducing supplementary foods, starting around the age 4-5 months. It should be supplemented by suitable foods rich in protein and other nutrients which called as "supplementary" foods. These include usually cow's milk, fruit juice, soft cooked rice, dhal and vegetables. Weaning should processed gradually and be based on the infants rate of growth and development skills. Weaning food should be carefully chose to complement the nutritional need of an infant, promote appropriate nutrient intake, and maintain growth⁵. Infancy is a period of rapid growth and the weaning in particular requires extra nourishment for new tissue development and growth, as many mothers do not have enough milk to form the sole source of nutrition for the infant. The time of weaning and the type of weaning food are thus crucial in determining the future growth and development of infants in the community. The role of inappropriate weaning practices in causing malnutrition has previously been underscored by various authorities⁶.

Adequate physical, mental and social well being is the sign of food health. Infant mortality rate remains highest in India, and malnutrition remains one of the major causes. Faulty feeding practice and early weaning is associated with high

infant mortality rate in India. One of the factors that determine the child's health is his growth and development throughout his life cycle. If it is promoted, we can have a happy contented life with healthy future generation⁷. Weaning is one of the milestones of child's development process and it is very important for child's growth and development. Breast milk does not provide all the nutrients for growing baby's needs after 6 months, in particular iron and calories that solid foods provides, in fact solid food should be introduced during this period to meet baby's requirement through weaning process⁸. Hence weaning provides nutritional balance for proper growth and development of the child. Improper weaning not only causes allergy, regurgitation, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal colic, but also cause of growth failure leading to kwashiorkor, marasmus and immunodeficiency among under five children⁹.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Approach and Design:

The study is based on a descriptive and quantitative research approach. A target group of 100 mothers nurturing a baby between the age of 6-12 months living in a selected community area of Anantnag Kashmir were randomly

selected, and data collected were tabulated, analyzed with multiple linear regression and percentage test using SPSS Software using 16.0 version. The mothers were interviewed using a questionnaire tool. The infants of a particular age were selected as they were facing drastic change from exclusive breastfeeding to solid food.

2.2 Criteria for Sample Selection

Inclusion criteria:

- Lactating mothers having infants of 6 – 12 months of age
- Who are willing to participate in the study

Exclusion criteria:

- Mother who are not available during the time of data collection
- Mothers who are not willing to participate in the study

2.3 Description of the Tool

The tool used for the data collection comprises of 2 sections: Section-1: It consists of socio- demographic variables. Section-2: A structured questionnaire consisting of 25 questions on knowledge regarding weaning

2.4 Score Interpretation

The scores were interpreted in the following manner:

Scoring key	Level of Knowledge
<50%	Inadequate Knowledge
50–75%	Moderately Adequate Knowledge
>75%	Adequate Knowledge

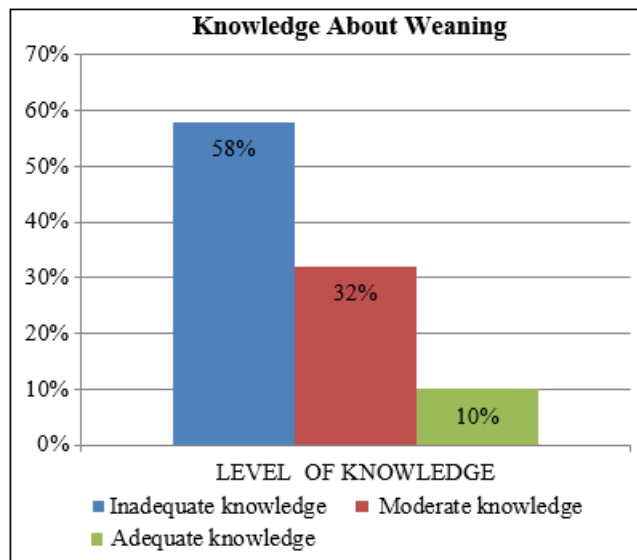
3. Results

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage distribution of demographic variables of the study participants

S. No.	Socio demographic Variables		Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Age of mothers	Below 22 years	27	27%
		22-26 years	29	29%
		26-30 years	30	30%
		Above 30 years	14	14%
2	Monthly income of family	Below 5000	17	17%
		5,000	11	11%
		10,000	35	35%
		15,000 & above	37	37%
3	Education Status	No Formal Education	48	48%
		Primary Education	32	32%
		Higher Secondary	13	13%
		Graduate	7	7%
4	No. of children's	1	15	15%
		2	60	60%
		More than 2	23	23%
		0	2	2%
5	Residence	Rural	95	95%
		Urban	5	5%
6	Occupation of mothers	Government employee	17	17%
		Private job	10	10%
		Home maker	69	69%
		Any other	4	4%
7	Type of Family	Nuclear family	45	45%
		Joint family	42	42%
		Extended	13	13%
8	Religion	Muslim	94	94%
		Hindu	1	1%
		Sikh	5	5%
		Others	0	0%
9	Income per Month (in rupees)	Up to 10,000	30	30%
		10,100-20,000	65	65%
		Above 20,000	5	5%
10	Education of husband	No Formal Education	7	7%
		Primary Education	12	12%
		Higher Secondary	30	30%
		Graduate and above	51	51%

Table 2: Distribution of level of knowledge on weaning among lactating mother's of infants.

S. No	Level of Knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
1	Inadequate Knowledge	58	58%
2	Moderate Knowledge	32	32%
3	Adequate Knowledge	10	10%



Graph 1: Knowledge status of lactating mothers about weaning, n=100

4. Recommendations

- Adequate health education should be promoted via National level campaigns, Health Seminars, Newspapers, Radio channels, etc.
- The same type of study can be done in all community areas.
- A comparative study can be done between urban and rural mothers.
- A similar study can be conducted on large sample for better generalization
- A similar study can be conducted with different teaching strategies like practice or attitude
- Promotion of Outreach programs through LHWs and LHV for early detection of improper weaning practices

5. Results

The analysis reveals that 58(58%) mothers of infants have inadequate knowledge; 32(32%) have moderate knowledge; 10 (10%) have adequate knowledge. There is a significant association found between the “educational status, occupation, type of family and no. of children” with knowledge.

6. Conclusion

In this study, most of the lactating mothers of infants had inadequate knowledge and moderate knowledge regarding weaning of infants. These findings suggested extensive health education program were needed to bring awareness among lactating mothers of infants on weaning practices.

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