

Original Article

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Awareness regarding breast feeding and complementary feeding in mothers of children with severe acute malnutrition at stabilization centre MultanSaadia Khan^{*a}, Imran Iqbal^a, Reema Arshad^a^a Department of preventive pediatrics, Children Hospital and Institute of Child Health, Multan

History

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Abstract

Breast feeding is the most natural way of feeding the infants and help to reduce child mortality and morbidity and millions of deaths could be prevented each year if mothers were aware of benefits of exclusive breast feeding for 4 -6 months and early initiation of breast feeding. In current study, awareness regarding breast feeding and complementary feeding in mothers of severely malnourished children was evaluated. The results showed that 99% mothers considered breast milk safe and effective but practically only 23% babies were breast fed while 77% were bottle fed. According to 58% mothers, there should be a early initiation of breast feeding, while 57% were un aware of the facts that clostrum should be given while 43% (43/100) of then considered it unhealthy and non effective. The current awareness reveals that most of the mothers prefer to give commercially available foods for their infants instead of breast feeding. This situation is alarming regarding child health and there is need to educate the mothers especially about the beneficial and health curing effects of breast feeding

1. Introduction

Malnutrition is a common health problem of Pakistan and according to National nutrition survey 2011, 15% of the children are severely malnourished and poor feeding practices that lack of breast feeding and complementary feeding contributes a lot to malnutrition (Agha, 2005). Adequate nutrition is essential in early childhood to ensure healthy growth and development of child (Liu et al., 2012).

Breast milk is elixir of life for babies and is available free of cost with no storage issues everywhere but now people are refusing to get its benefits (Ilyas & Rizvi, 2006). The reduction of infant and young child malnutrition is essential for the achievement of millennium development goals (MDGs) and for that importance of breastfeeding is accepted globally (MDGs, 2013). In 2001, World Health Organization declared that infant should be exclusively breast fed for six months and initiation of complementary feeding is necessary after six months along with breastfeeding. It

is stated that millions of deaths could be prevented each year if all babies should be breast feed for 4-6 months and there is early initiation of complementary feeding (WHO, 2002).

Non breast fed babies have 11 times more chances of diarrhea and 15 time more chances of having pneumonia as compared to breastfed babies. In spite of too much benefits of breastfeeding mothers are now not will to nurture their babies with this precious gift of nature and prefer bottle feeding (Boccolini et al., 2011). According to Pakistan demographic and health survey 2012-2013 just 37% of children below 6 months are breast fed and rate of early initiation of breast feeding is just 28% (Bhutta et al., 2013; NIPS, 2013).

Recently for the management of malnourished infants less than 6 months a project MAMI, Management of Acute Malnutrition is introduced with an objective to establish breast feeding in malnourished children along with early initiation of complementary feeding (MAMI, 2010).

If we have to improve health statistics we have to focus on primary health care and preventive pediatrics and

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Table 1. Characteristics of sample

Sample size	100 Females
Mean age	25years +/- 3 years
Area	70 % females (70/100) were from urban areas while 30 % (30/100) were from rural areas.
Education	46% of females were literate.

there is need to educate mothers. The rationale of carrying out this study was that to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding breastfeeding and complementary feeding and to counsel them for its importance and to tackle all their myths and beliefs regarding breastfeeding.

2. Materials and methods

This study was conducted at department of preventive pediatrics Children hospital and institute of child health, Multan from March 2013 to September 2013. This is a descriptive /cross sectional study. A questionnaire was designed and all mothers were interviewed in detail after taking proper consent. This study included total of 100 females that were the mothers of malnourished children visiting the follow up room of department of preventive pediatrics Children hospital and institute of child health, Multan. A questionnaire was designed and others were interviewed in detail after taking proper consent.

3. Results

In this study the mean age of sample was 25years +/-3 years. 70% females (70/100) were from urban areas while 30% (30/100) were from rural areas. 54% (54/100) of mothers were illiterate (Table 1). This study showed that 99% (99/100) considered breast milk safe and effective than other feeds (Fig 1) but practically only 23% (23/100) babies were breast fed while 77% (77/100) were bottle fed (Fig 2). Prelacteal feed was given by 82% (82/100). According to 58% (58/100) mothers there should be a early initiation of breast feeding, while 57% (57/100) were un aware of the facts that clostrum should be given while 43% (43/100) of then considered it unhealthy and non effective (Fig 3). 82% (82/100) considered 4 months a period of exclusive breast feeding, 61% (61/100) were counseled by doctors regarding the benefits of breast feeding, 50%

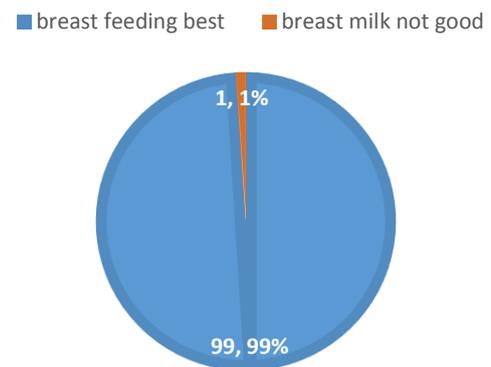


Figure 1. Concept of mothers regarding safety of breast feeding

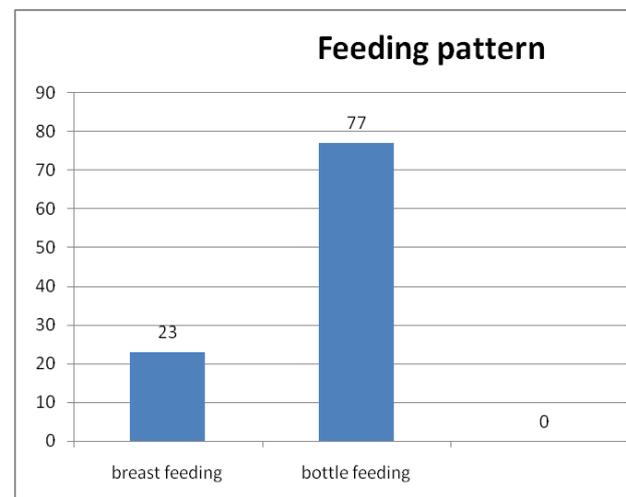


Fig 2. Practical evaluation of mothers feeding pattern to their young ones

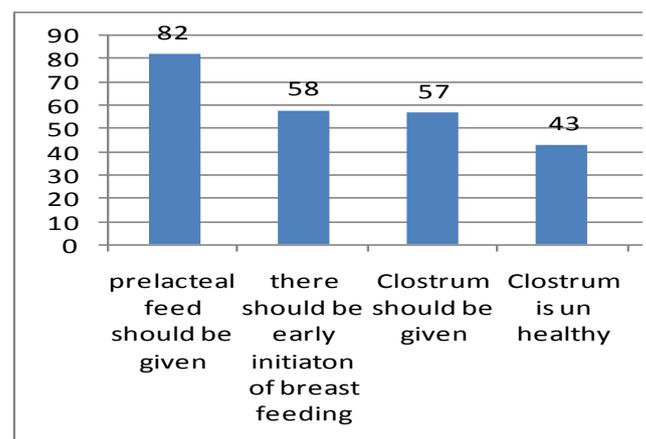


Fig 3. Evaluation of mothers feeding to their young-ones during various lactation stages

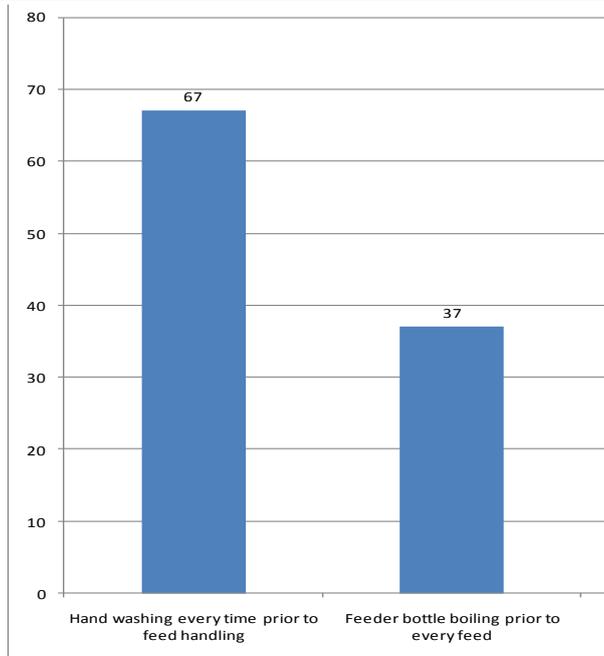


Fig 4. Hygienic awareness of mothers regarding breast feeding

feeding as a contraceptive tool and 34% (34/100) were aware of its importance for the prevention of breast cancer (Fig 4). 93% (93/100) mothers were aware of benefits of complementary feeding but only 54% (54/100) were giving it while 46% (46/100) considered it to cause pneumonia. 68% (68/100) of mothers were using cerelac as complementary feed (Fig 5)

4. Discussion

Breast feeding is the natural way of nurturing babies. This research was done with an objective to assess the awareness and knowledge of mothers of severely malnourished mothers regarding breast feeding and complementary feeding. Despite of various efforts and emphasis on breastfeeding worldwide unluckily breast feeding trend and rate of exclusive breast feeding are very low in Pakistan as compared to other Asian countries (NNS, 2011). This research shows that although 99% were aware that breast feeding is the best but practically just 23% of them breast fed their babies and 77% were giving bottle feeding. These results are similar to Pakistan Demographics and Health survey 2012-2013 (NIPS, 2013) that shows that Pakistan has lowest exclusively breast feeding rates in Asia 37% and no competitor in the race of bottle feeding while prevalence of breast feeding in srilanka is 76%, Nepal is 70%, Bangladesh is 64%, India 46%. One study from Yemen also emphasis the role of exclusive breast

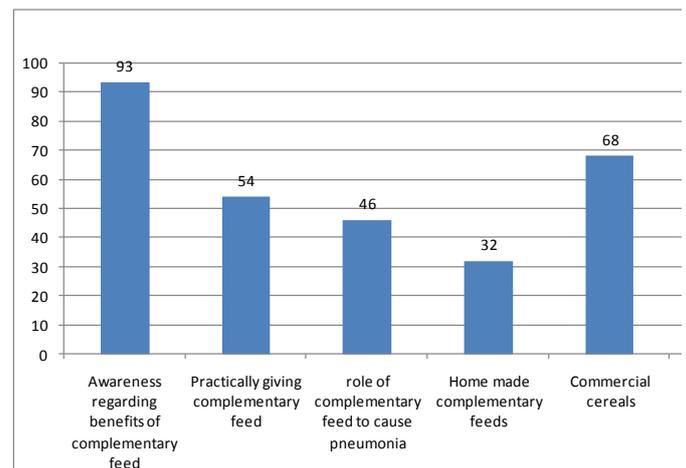


Fig 5. Evaluation of complementary feeding in controlling various diseases

feeding and early complementary feeding in reducing the children mortality (Bahl, 2005). (50/100) were aware of the use of exclusive breast

Similarly study done at Karachi reveals that 50% of sample population has no awareness regarding breastfeeding and importance of clostrum. In our study 43% considered it unhealthy (Baloch, 2009). This shows that despite the well known benefits the increasing trends of bottle feeding and decreasing trends of breastfeeding are due to urbanization and advertisements of breast feeding substitutes (Morisky et al., 2002) and lack of proper implementation of National Breast feeding legislation. The results from the current findings were comparable with Mahmood et al. (1997) who assessed the nutritional beliefs and practices in pregnant and lactating mothers in an urban and rural area of Pakistan. This study showed that complementary feeding practices are also not satisfactory and 46% of mothers not giving it to their babies with a fear of pneumonia, these results are similar with other studies (Shazia et al., 2010) and poor complementary feeding is a contributory factor increasing burden of malnutrition in age group between 6 months to 18 months (Srivastavan & Sandhu, 2006).

We suggest that there should be more focus on primary health care by government and lady Health workers programmes need to be strengthen and policies should be planned for proper guidance of mothers and most important is there is proper check over breast milk substitute sale and advertisement.

5. Significance

This data reveal that Breast feeding trends seems to be vanishing and bottle feeding is a very common practice, and most of the mothers were giving commercially available cereals as initial complementary diets. Health education and awareness is the demand of the day..

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