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Original Article

Situation of Supplementary Feeding in 6-12 Month Old Children in Ilam

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Abstract:

Background & Aim: Exclusive breast feeding is highly recommended for children under six months and the best time for starting supplementary food is the end of sixth months. Inadequate feeding can lead to malnutrition. Since infants' supplementary feeding pattern is influenced highly by the socio-cultural status; it is necessary to study the subject in diverse conditions. This study aimed to investigate supplementary feeding pattern in 6-12 months children referred to Ilam clinics in 2002.

Methods & Materials: In this study, 364 mothers with 6-12 months children were selected using convenient sampling method from 10 health care centers. Data were collected using a four-sectioned questionnaire including mothers and their babies demographic characteristics, feeding pattern (frequency, the type of milk), supplementary food (the age of onset and the type of the first supplementary food, the time of starting mixed foods, and the source of information about supplementary food) and mothers' performance about feeding with supplementary food. The questionnaire was filled via interview.

Results: Findings showed that the growth curve in 84.8% of babies was in the health road. About 38% of babies were the first child. In 50.9% of samples, supplementary food was started before 6 months of age and in 49.9% of the cases, it was started after 6 month old. Supplementary feeding accompanied with breast feeding in 83.5% of the infants. The most used supplementary food was rice mucilage (40.8% of the babies). The interval between starting one supplementary food and the other one was 3-4 days in 50.2% of the cases. Also 80.8% of samples started feeding in the amount of one spoon and increased it gradually. The majority of mothers (64%) did not add sugar, salt and spices in order to attract their babies. As well, 75.6% of samples used spoon and cup for feeding and 92.9% knew the safe time for keeping cooked food in the refrigerator. The source of information about supplementary feeding in 65.4% of mothers was health care providers and in 5% were books and booklets.

Conclusion: Findings indicated that more than half of mothers began supplementary feeding for their children before 6 months old without pursuing any accepted pattern. It seems that usual educational programs in Ilam were unable to answer all the problems aroused in this issue. Hence, educating mothers using other methods such as visual teaching material is recommended.

Keywords:

6-12 Months Children, Supplementary Feeding, Ilam

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