



TEACHING PROGRAM IS EFFECTIVE IN INCREASING KNOWLEDGE REGARDING WEANING AMONG MOTHERS OF INFANTS

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ABSTRACT

Background: Weaning is vital for the growth and development of infants and children. If a baby is to maintain the expected rate of growth and remain healthy and well nourished, supplementary feeding has to be resorted from the 6th month of age onwards to meet nutritional requirements. Aim: To evaluate the effect of planned teaching program on the knowledge regarding weaning among mothers of infants. Methods: Total 60 mothers were included. Data was collected by using a self structured questionnaire.

Results: Out of 60 mothers in pretest, 27 (45%) had poor, 33(55%) had average and no one (0%) had good knowledge score. Post test results revealed that no one (0%) had poor knowledge, 42(70%) scored average knowledge, 18(30%) achieved good knowledge. The improvement in the knowledge was statistically significant ($P=0.0002$) **Conclusion:** The planned teaching program utilized in the study had been found to be an effective tool for significantly improving the mother's knowledge.

KEYWORDS : Planned teaching program, Mothers knowledge, weaning diet.

INTRODUCTION

Children constitute the foundation of a nation. Healthy children evolve to become healthy adult and effectively participate in the national development. While each newborn baby's perceived as an addition to a family, it also brings with it new responsibilities. The World Health Organization (WHO) theme of 2003 is: "Shape the future of life, healthy environment to children".¹

The term weaning describes the time period in which a progressive reduction of breastfeeding or the feeding of infant-formula takes place while the infant is gradually introduced to solid foods. It is a crucial time in an infant's life as not only does it involve with a great deal of rapid change for the child, but it is also associated with the development of food preferences, eating behaviors and body weight in childhood and also in adolescence and adulthood. Therefore, how a child is weaned may have an influence later, on the individual's entire life. Babies are traditionally first introduced to solid foods using spoon-feeding, in most countries.²

Over the last century, tradition has been to introduce infants to solid foods using spoon-feeding of specially prepared infant foods.³ Current, WHO guidance recommends that infants are initially offered smoothly blended foods, progressing in texture as the infant until by 12 months, infants should be eating family foods. Finger foods, e.g. whole foods, are recommended from 8 months, but alongside purees, rather than as the main diet.⁴

However, over the last 10–15 years, an alternative approach known as 'baby-led weaning' has grown in popularity. Here, instead of blending special foods, infants are allowed to self-feed family foods in their whole form. The emphasis is on allowing infants to choose what, and how much, they eat and for the infant to be part of family mealtimes.⁵ Although in reality this approach is likely what mothers did for millennia before the introduction of specially prepared foods, baby-led weaning represents an alternative to the modern, industry-driven infant feeding culture.⁵

In India, to prevent and control malnutrition, the process of weaning must involve education about how to hygienically prepare weaning foods, clean infant feeding utensils and sterilize them in a pressure cooker. More and more women in towns and rural areas (construction workers) are in need of infant energy, protein-and micronutrient-rich foods that are properly packed and at reasonable prices.

Knowledge of foods and practices is an important aspect of preventive and social pediatrics. During the childhood the overall growth and development of the children totally depends upon mother or parents. If the mother is not aware about the nutritional status, nutritional needs of her child according to his requirements the child may leads to nutritional deficiency disorders. Previously, it has been reported that mothers' knowledge regarding weaning in Indian regions is low, which can be increased with the use of corrective measures. Hence, the study was aimed to evaluate if planned teaching programme is effective in increasing the knowledge of mothers about weaning.

Methods

Sixty mothers of infants were selected after they agreed to participate in the study. The tool was divided into two parts.

Part I containing demographic data to obtain socioeconomic characteristics of mothers of infants.

Part II containing structured knowledge questionnaires (30 multiple-choice questions) to assess the knowledge of mothers of infants on weaning. Each correct response carried 1 mark and incorrect response carried 0 marks. The score ranged from a minimum of zero to a maximum of thirty.

Pre-test was conducted by using structured questionnaires followed by implementation of planned teaching program. Post-test was done after 7 days.

Data analysis

Data were presented as frequency and percentages. Distribution of subjects between pre- and post-test and association with knowledge score was calculated using Chi-square test. P value < 0.05 was considered significant.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics

We observed that majority 36 (60%) subjects were in the age of 18-25 years, 16 were from 26-30 years, and 8 were from 31-35 years. Majority 33(55%) samples completed o higher secondary education. Majority of mothers were house wives 40 (66%) and in case of monthly income 33 (55%) mother's family monthly income was 5001 – 10,000 per month. Majority 36 (60%) mothers had two children and majority 43 of mothers were from joint family (Table 1).

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables (n=60)

S. No.	Characteristics	Frequency
1.	Age of mothers	
	18-25 years	36
	26- 30 years	16
	31-35 years	08
2.	Educational status of mothers	
	Illiterate	0
	Primary	7
	High school	10
	Higher secondary	33
3.	Occupation of mother	
	House wife	40
	Business	2
	Professional	17
4.	Others	1
	Family monthly income	
	Below 2000/-	6
	2000-5000/-	2
5.	5001-10000/-	33
	Above 10000/-	19
	6.	Family type
Joint family		13
Nuclear family		47

Effectiveness of planned teaching program

We observed that none of the mothers before implementation of planned teaching programme had good knowledge regarding weaning. After implementation of the programme, 70% of the mothers have good score. We also observed that planned teaching programme was significantly effective in improving the knowledge of mothers regarding weaning (P=0.0002) (Fig 1).

Association of risk factors

Our study observed that mothers' age, education, occupation, type of family and income was significantly associated with knowledge of mothers of infants regarding weaning diet.

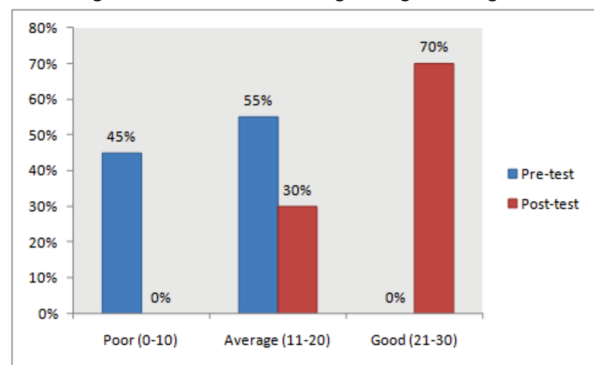


Fig 1: Effectiveness of planned teaching program on improving the knowledge regarding weaning among mothers of under 2-year children. X-axis shows the percentage of mothers

Discussion

Healthy children are full of energy and are active. The human milk alone, even in reasonable quantities, cannot provide all the energy and protein required for maintaining an adequate velocity of growth for the infant, after the age 6 months. It is therefore necessary to introduce more concentrated energy dense nutritional and iron supplements by this age. Adequate nutrition is essential to maintain optimum health of baby at the age of 6 months. Their growth and development are according to the expected norms and show no nutritional deficiency.

Nutritional deficiency and malnutrition is worldwide problem

with the highest prevalence in developing countries. It is found especially among women of child bearing age and during pregnancy, Lactation due to improper weaning diet. Due to traditions and customs in society of rural areas mothers are not giving weaning diet to infant properly.

Our study observed that teaching programme is effective to improve the knowledge of mothers regarding weaning. Ramchandra et al observed that providing proper education may increase their knowledge level regarding weaning diet.⁷ Out of 50 Mothers of infant in their study, in pretest 15 (30%) poor knowledge, 35(70%) average knowledge, 0(0%) good knowledge. post test showed 0% poor knowledge, 39(78%) having average knowledge, 11(22%) having good knowledge. Kulkarni and Kulkarni also reported similar findings.⁸ They concluded that planned teaching programme on complementary feeding is scientific, logical, essential and cost-effective strategy. We also observed that demographic variables were associated with knowledge of mothers which has been also reported previously.⁸

In general, mothers have very little knowledge about the nutritive value. It is the responsibility of health workers to provide appropriate information to the mothers in the community, hospital and clinics, at various levels of child development. Parents should be made aware of their role in practicing healthy food habits. Demonstrations on the preparations of simple multipurpose food can create interest in the mothers.

Conclusion

The high prevalence of nutritional illness in infants and malnutrition due to improper weaning will increase the mortality and morbidity rate. Hence, it is important to implement proper interventions to promote the proper weaning practices. The study found that still there are mothers who are unaware about the healthy weaning practices or techniques, which was improved upon implementation of planned teaching programme.

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