



A STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE REGARDING WEANING AMONG MOTHERS OF INFANTS IN DR. SMCSI MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL, KARAKONAM, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DISTRICT.

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KEYWORDS :

"Little children from the moment they are weaned are making their way toward independence" -

MARIA MONTESSORI

Weaning is the process of gradual and progressive transfer of the baby from breast feeding to usual family diet. The incorporation of complementary feeding is the first major proactive step in the infant's life towards "growing up". It requires series of neuro-developmental achievements and it becomes a way of socialization.

Complementary foods are generally given between 6 to 24 months of age along with the breast milk. The choice of complementary foods and feeding practices in developing or underdeveloped countries have limited scientific guidelines. These guidelines must consider several issues such as time of introduction, types, order, amount of foods given, and providing essential micro and macromolecular contents. Scientific food recommendations must be cost-effective, affordable, locally available, and practical for low-income populations, many of which are susceptible to malnutrition and obesity.

The timing of the first introduction of solid food during infancy may have potential effects on life-long health. It can be seen that very often solid foods are either given too early or too late. According to UNICEF, the frequency and amounts of food that is given insufficient hence; hindering the normal growth of the child or their consistency or energy density may be incorrect about the child's needs.

Need for the study

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends exclusive breast feeding for the first 6 months of age, with the addition of complementary feeds at 6 months with continued breast feeds until at least the age of 2. Proper breast feeding and complementary feeding practices can prevent under-five mortality by 19%. Knowledge of mother about these factors will help in planning interventions to improve feeding practices.

The investigator during her clinical postings in the pediatric wards and outpatient departments has witnessed the fact that many children were weaned early before 6 months and also it was found in the literature review that many mothers have weaned early because of several reasons. This motivated the investigator to choose this study, to explore the knowledge and attitude of mothers regarding weaning.

Statement of the problem

A study to assess the knowledge and attitude regarding weaning among mothers of infants in Dr. SMCSI Medical College & Hospital, Karakonam, Thiruvananthapuram District.

Objectives

1. To assess the knowledge among mothers of infant regarding weaning.
2. To assess the attitude among mothers of infant regarding weaning.
3. To associate the knowledge and attitude of mothers of infant with the selected demographic variables.

Operational definitions

1. **Assess:** In this study, it refers to the level of knowledge and attitude regarding weaning among mothers.
2. **Knowledge:** In this study, knowledge refers to the amount of information or awareness of the mothers about weaning which is evaluated in terms of correct response during the study.
3. **Attitude:** In this study, attitude refers to the general feeling or a frame of reference around a mother about weaning, which is evaluated in terms of expressed responses of weaning.
4. **Weaning:** In this study, weaning refers to supplementary food along with breast milk after the age of 6 months.
5. **Mothers:** In this study mothers refer to women who have children in the age group of 6-12 months.
6. **Infants:** In this study, infant refers to children in the age group of 6-12 months.

Assumptions

- Mothers will have some knowledge and attitude regarding Weaning

Hypothesis

- H1** There will be a significant association between the level of knowledge regarding weaning among mothers with the selected demographic variables.
- H2** There will be a significant association between attitudes regarding weaning among mothers with the selected demographic variables.

Research Approach

Quantitative research approach

Research design

Descriptive design

Variables

Dependent Variable:

Knowledge and attitude of mothers of infant regarding weaning.

Independent Variable:

Age, sex of the child, education, occupation, income per capita, type of family, and the number of children.

Population

Population under the present study involves mothers of infants attending outpatient Department of Paediatrics in Dr. SMCSI Medical College & Hospital Karakonam, Thiruvananthapuram District.

Sample & Sampling technique

Non-probability convenience sampling technique and sample size consists of 150 mothers of infants attending outpatient department of Paediatrics in Dr. SMCSI Medical College & Hospital Karakonam, Thiruvananthapuram District.

Tools /instruments

The data collection instrument used in the present study were:

Section A): Socio-demographic data.

Section B): Semi-structured questionnaire to assess the level of knowledge.

Section C): Semi-structured questionnaire to assess the level of attitude.

Scoring and interpretation

For section B,

75-100% = Good knowledge (Adequate knowledge)

50-74% = Average knowledge (Moderately adequate knowledge)

<50% = Poor knowledge (Inadequate knowledge)

Score interpretation for attitude

For section C,

Negative Attitude - < 50 %

Positive Attitude - > 50 %

Data collection Procedure

The data collection plan specifies when, where, and how the data will be collected. 150 samples were selected by convenience sampling method. The purpose of the study was explained. Informed written consent was obtained from the subjects. It took 25-30 minutes to answer the questionnaire. Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Section-1: Demographic variables of mothers of infants

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Age of mothers

a) < 20 years	12	8
b) 21-25 years	70	46.7
c) 26-30 years	44	29.3
d) > 31 years	24	16.

Marital status

a) married	139	92.6
b) widowed	6	4
c) divorced	4	2.7
d) single	1	0.7

Number of children

a) One	71	47.3
b) Two	60	40
c) Three	1	0.7
d) Four or more	18	12

Religion

a) Hindu	48	32
b) Christian	80	53.3
c) Islam	19	12.7
d) Others	3	2

Education of mother

a) Primary school	16	10.7
b) Secondary school	35	23.3
c) Higher secondary school	43	28.6
d) College	37	24.7
e) Illiterate	19	12.7

Occupation of the mother

a) Government Job	5	3.3
b) Private sector	41	27.4
c) Cooli worker	13	8.6
d) Self employed	38	25.3
e) unemployed	53	35.4

Income

a) Below 5000	64	42.6
b) 5000 – 10,000	60	40

c) 10,001 – 20,000	16	10.7
d) Above 20,000	10	6.7

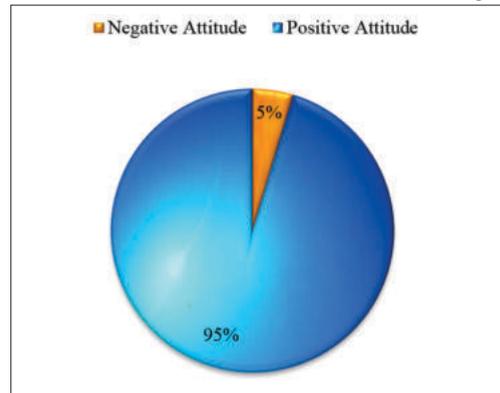
Type of family

a) Nuclear	94	62.7
b) Joint	55	36.6
c) Extended	1	0.7

Section II: Overall Knowledge level of mothers of infant on weaning (N=150)

Knowledge Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Adequate	24	16
Moderately Adequate	117	78
Inadequate	9	6

Section III: Attitude of mothers of infants on weaning



It shows that majority of the participants 143(95.3%) had positive attitude and 7 (4.7%) had negative attitude towards weaning

Nursing Implication

The implications were given on various aspects like nursing education, practice, administration and nursing research.

Nursing Education

The present study emphasizes enhancement regarding knowledge and developing a positive attitude towards weaning practices. To achieve this, nurses and all health personnel should be given the responsibility to teach and teaching should be repeated until they have gain knowledge.

Nursing Practice

The teaching helps to improve knowledge and thereby change their behavior. The present study has revealed that health education can be an effective method to improve the knowledge of mothers of infant. So the study implies that the nurse as a service provider plays an important role in imparting knowledge and helping the mothers to be aware of weaning.

Nursing Administration

Nurse as an administrator plays an important role in educating the professionals and in policymaking. The special implication of nursing administration in hospitals is that they would pay attention to women in reproductive age and to see whether they are provided with enough education about weaning. Being a nurse administrator, one can arrange in-service education and special training programs regarding weaning practices.

Nursing Research

The essence of research is to build a body of knowledge in nursing. The findings of the present study serve as the basis for the professionals and the students to conduct further studies. The generalization of the study results can be made by replication of the study. Nursing research is how the nursing

profession is growing.

Limitations

- The sample size was limited to 150 mothers of infants.
- Only one hospital was included in the study based on the availability of the sample. Hence the possibility for wider generalization is limited.
- The study was limited to mothers of infants.
- The present study assessed the knowledge and attitude of mothers of infants, not the practice.

Recommendations

Based on the study that has been conducted, certain suggestions are given for future studies:

1. A similar study can be done on a large population
2. A study can be done with other populations.
3. The selected variables in the study of socioeconomic factors and nutritional status of the children can be studied independently.
4. A comparative study can be undertaken to see the difference between rural and urban areas regarding weaning.
5. A pretest and post-test study can be conducted to study the effectiveness of the self-instructional module.
6. An evaluative study may be conducted to investigate the effect of a nutritional education program on knowledge, attitude, and practices of urban and rural mothers.

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