



KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE REGARDING WEANING AMONG PRIMIPARA MOTHERS

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ABSTRACT The success of infant development through complementary feeding depends on direct maternal knowledge because ignorance may lead to nutritional problems. The researchers conducted a descriptive study through convenient non-probability sampling to assess nursing practices and weaning knowledge of fifty primipara women at BCM Hospital Khairabad, Sitapur. The researchers obtained written consent prior to obtaining data through checklists as well as well-designed questions. The study participants scored an average of 3.82 points with six participants above the mean average (SD=6.63) while their knowledge assessment had an average score of 2.84 points with seven participants above the mean average (SD=4.97). Knowledge of mothers alongside their education status and food choices exhibited significant correlations that reached statistical significance at $p < 0.05$. The relationship between maternal weaning awareness and reported weaning techniques was recognized as positive. Results demonstrate that mothers' weaning views heavily depend on their dietary choices combined with their education level. Improving weaning knowledge positively affects the implementation of appropriate supplemental feeding methods, decreasing infant malnutrition risks. The research explores methods for stopping malnutrition among new mothers who are primipara during weaning with supplemental feeding strategies.

KEYWORDS : Weaning, complementary feeding, primipara mothers, malnutrition prevention

INTRODUCTION

The development of children depends strongly on receiving optimal nutrition during their first two years of life in light of present-day emphasis on the 1,000 days period from pregnancy through the initial two years after birth. WHO and UNICEF agree that new mothers should begin breastfeeding within one hour of birth to practice exclusive nursing for six months and then add complementary foods while continuing breastfeeding beyond two years. Health experts consider complementary feeding important at six months because breast milk fails to provide all the necessary nutrients for the developing baby. The period between babyhood to weaning exposes children to severe risks of nutrient deficiencies and undernourishment [1,14]. After six months, Indian Council of Medical Research and National Nutrition Institute advocate home-based semi-solid foods for infants [2,15]. Infants should consume complementary food to supplement their breast milk rather than substituting it. Any complementary food selection needs to combine low cost with high energy content and easy digestion properties and use locally available ingredients. Previous UNICEF promotion materials on baby and early child nutrition focused mainly on evidence-based practices to support complementary feeding in home environments. The breastfeeding process integrates small portions of mashed food at six months then proceeds through finger foods at six to eight months before settling on family foods at twelve months [3, 4].

Parents should restrict their child from consuming tea or coffee since they stop iron absorption and also exclude aerated drinks along with excessively sugared fruit juice because these reduce food consumption while damaging appetite for healthy food and nuts present risks of choking hazards and snacks containing excessive sugar salt and fat without nutritional value. Infants need total reliance on parents along with grandparents for their nutritional requirements during weaning. Multiple aspects of a mother's condition including her educational level and earning capacity together with her family situation and past experiences as well as community environment shape her knowledge about and feeding practices. The assessment of present weaning practices helps develop solutions to decrease mortality due to malnutrition. The research objective evaluates first-time mothers' understanding and reported feeding methods of complementary food while studying their practices through age-based and educational and cultural characteristics [5]. The systematic process which introduces suitable foods during the right time alongside breast milk serves to supply needed nutrients to babies represents weaning based on (UNICEF, 1984) [6]. Poor infant practices together with their consequences rank as the foremost major social and economic barriers facing worldwide development (WHO & UNICEF, [7] The nutritional requirements of infants require complementary food after the sixth month while breastfeeding remains vital until the second year of life [8,16]. Improper weaning leads to malnutrition, anemia, and

high infant mortality [9,17]. Annam Reddi Leelavathi [10] and Aina Folasade et al [11] and Mr. Narayan Swamy et al [12] all showed that primipara mothers have insufficient understanding of weaning methods. Experiences of women during pregnancy along with education level and occupation stand as important determinants for weaning choices. Developing countries need healthcare professionals to educate mothers about infant nutrition since this action helps decrease mortality rates.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive research design and employed a non-experimental approach to examine knowledge and self-reported weaning practices of primipara mothers at BCM Hospital in Khairabad Sitapur. The research included fifty primipara mothers as participants who came from the outpatient department through convenience sampling. The study selected willing mothers who had one child and were either Hindi or English literate and ready during data collection times.

Data Collection Tools:

- Demographic proforma (religion, education, occupation, dietary preferences)
- Structured questionnaire (20 multiple-choice questions)
- Checklist (25 yes/no items)

The content validity was evaluated by Child Health Nursing Professors together with Pediatricians. A pilot study ($r=1.2$) confirmed feasibility. The data collection took place during July 24-25 2023 after obtaining institutional permission and written consent with an assurance of confidentiality. The analysis included both descriptive statistics through frequency and percentage analysis, and standard deviation and mean calculation as well as inferential statistics with Chi-square tests. Results showed that knowledge alignment with practicing habits demonstrated a moderate positive relationship, while educational level and dietary choices were positively linked with the obtained knowledge.

Aim:

The research goal at BMC Hospital Outpatient Department, Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh, focuses on measuring both weaning knowledge levels and how primipara mothers practice weaning.

Objectives:

- To assess the knowledge regarding weaning among primipara mothers.
- To assess the self-reported practices regarding weaning among primipara mothers
- To find the association between knowledge regarding weaning among primipara with selected demographic variables.

- To find the correlation between knowledge and practice regarding weaning among primipara mothers.

Conceptual Framework

The research utilized Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory which had four distinct components. The study collected data about the mothers' existing knowledge and current practices at the beginning section. Data collection happens through structured tools as part of the Throughput process. Output: Category of knowledge/practice levels. Feedback: Interpretation for practice implications [13] Operational terms received specific definitions within the research framework, which was built on background assumptions about mothers' initial understanding of matters and implementation abilities. Two research hypotheses showed correlations between demographic factors and knowledge levels/practices as well as between acquired knowledge and reported practices of mothers.

OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

Frequency And Percentage Distribution Of Demographic Variables

Descriptive Statistics Demographic Characteristics A statistical breakdown of demographic information exists in Table 1 for 50 primipara mothers. The selected participants mainly identified as Hindu at 86% (n=43) membership but Muslims (6%, n=3) and Sikhs (8%, n=4) made up the rest of the sample group. The results showed graduates composed the largest group (68%, n=34) with intermediate and high school education and illiteracy each having 12% (n=6) and 8% (n=4) respectively. 78% (n=39) of the participants were housewives while private job holders made up 18% (n=9) and government employees comprised 4% (n=2) of the respondents. More than three-quarters (78%) (n=39) of participants followed pure vegetarian eating habits while the remaining participants were split between non-vegetarian habits and a combination of pure vegetarian and egg consumption (18% and 4%, respectively) (n=9, n=2).

Knowledge Assessment:

A review of primipara mothers' understanding regarding weaning practices appears in Table 2. Results showed that 54% (n=27) demonstrated good knowledge of weaning practices but 34% (n=17) had average understanding and 12% (n=6) showed very good understanding. None of the participants had insufficient weaning practice knowledge. Participant understanding of weaning practices showed a moderate level as assessed through the mean score of 2.84.

Self-reported Practice Score Regarding Weaning

A majority of participants (80%) scored very good in weaning practice followed by those with good scores at 16% and average at 4% as shown in Table 3. None had poor scores. The mean score was 3.82.

Association Between Knowledge And Demographic Variables

Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine the association between knowledge scores and selected demographic variables. As shown in Table 4, significant associations were found between knowledge scores and two demographic variables: educational status and dietary preferences ($p < 0.05$). However, no significant association was observed between knowledge scores and religion or occupational status.

Table 1: Association Between Knowledge Score And Demographic Variables (n=50)

Demographic Variables	Average	Good	Very Good	χ^2	p-value	Significance
Religion				-	0.05	NS
Educational Status				-	0.05	*S
Occupational Status				-	0.05	NS
Dietary Preferences				-	0.05	*S

Association Between Weaning Practice Scores And Demographic Variables.

Graduates demonstrated a superior grasp of weaning compared to illiterate mothers where 52.9% of graduates had good knowledge but only 75% of nonprofessional mothers attained only average mastery. People who continued their education developed superior weaning practices. The knowledge of weaning was average for 43.9% of pure vegetarians while 23.1% performed well and 33.3% exhibited very

good knowledge. The knowledge levels of non-vegetarians distributed evenly across all three levels while they scored it on average. The weaning knowledge displayed by the mothers depended on their nutritional dietary choices

Table 2: Association Of Weaning Practice Score And Demographic Variables (n=50)

S No	Demographic variables	Practice score						Total	P value	df	Level of Significance
1	Religion	Average	%	Good	%	Very good	%		0.05	12.59	NS
	Hindu	15	34.9	22	51.6	6	13.9	43			
	Muslim	1	33.3	2	66.7	0	0	3			
	Sikh	1	25	3	75	0	0	4			
	Christian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2	Educational Status								0.05	12.59	*S
	Graduate	12	35.3	18	52.9	4	11.8	34			
	Intermediate	1	16.7	5	83.3	0	0	6			
	High school	3	50	2	33.3	1	16.7	6			
	Illiterate	3	75	0	0	1	25	4			
3	Occupational status								0.05	12.59	NS
	Housewife	17	43.6	13	33.3	9	23.0	39			
	Farmer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
	Private job	2	28.6	4	57.1	3	42.9	9			
	Government job	1	50	0	0	1	50	2			
4	Dietary Preferences								0.05	12.59	*S
	Pure vegetarian	17	43.9	9	23.1	13	33.3	39			
	Pure vegetarian with egg	1	50	1	50	0	0	2			
	Non vegetarian	4	44.4	4	44.4	1	11.1	9			
	Mostly junk food	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			

Correlation Between Knowledge and Practice

The analysis of weaning knowledge and practice levels used Pearson's correlation coefficient to evaluate the connection between these variables. The research data presented in Table 6 established a moderately strong link ($r = 0.6702$) between weaning knowledge levels and practice implementation thus verifying the study prediction that better weaning practices exist among people with higher levels of knowledge.

Table 3: Correlation Between Knowledge And Practice (n=50)

Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)	p-value	Interpretation
Knowledge and Self-reported Practice	0.6702	<0.05	Moderately positive correlation

The relationship demonstrated that better understanding of weaning results in improved weaning methods despite the discrepancy between the two variables because $r < 1$. Research data highlights the necessity of knowledge development programs for primipara mothers to improve appropriate weaning practice adoption.

DISCUSSION

Results from the study titled “A Descriptive Study to Assess the Knowledge and Self-Reported Practice Regarding Weaning Among Primipara Mothers Attending Outpatient Department of BCM Hospital, Khairabad, Sitapur, UP” have substantial influence on nursing education while affecting nursing research and nursing administration and nursing practice.

Nursing Education

Education acts as a fundamental factor to improve nursing practice standards. The education of primipara mothers about correct weaning techniques and their effects on child growth should include nursing student involvement. Students under nursing education must receive instruction in delivering effective health education related to complementary feeding and should gain experience in community-based service supervision. Studies carried out by Bhutia¹ confirm that proper complementary feeding instruction minimizes under-five child undernutrition problems and leads to enhanced growth and health results.

Nursing Research

The analysis shows that further research must continue to investigate infant feeding methods. Professional nurses must organize workshops together with seminars for sharing research outcomes while teaching evidence-based methods to nurses working in healthcare. More research is needed to develop education programs with effectiveness tests for weaning knowledge growth among rural mothers. Researchers at Lassi et al.² established that targeted education for mothers creates better child nutritional outcomes while improving feeding practices for infants which highlights the need for continuous research projects.

Nursing Administration

Nursing administrators maintain crucial positions for creating policies together with their work in program execution activities. The creation and distribution of educational materials and health education camps must be supported by administrators as tools to increase knowledge about hospital and community weaning practices. According to Dewey³ structured health system support stands as the key factor for timely complementary feeding implementation which produces better pediatric health results and developmental achievements.

Nursing Practice

Healthcare providers situated in both medical care facilities and public health services should deliver knowledge about correct weaning timing and procedures to mothers. Nurses need to deliver periodic health education that presents both the advantages of mixing nutrition with breast milk along with the health problems that stem from delayed weaning among children. Research from Black et al.⁴ demonstrates that the first two years establish a crucial opportunity for nutrition interventions which protect children from malnutrition while promoting their development completely. This confirms that nurses need to prioritize the promotion of proper weaning methods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A current research study could be duplicated using extensive sample sizes to achieve wider application of its findings. The study should investigate the knowledge and practice of complementary feeding procedures between mothers who live in urban areas versus rural areas. A cross-sectional design which uses pre-experimental methods can approach the study. Research activities should take place within both the primary health centre and child clinic facilities.

LIMITATION

Primipara mothers were not willing. Due to a small sample size the research findings cannot be properly generalized.

SUMMARY

This section analyzed the study through summary and offered discussions and conclusions supported with Implications related to Nursing Education and Nursing Research together with Nursing Administration and Nursing Practice together with recommendations and limitations for future investigations.

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