

## Research Article

## Knowledge and Attitude of Nursing Staff about 'Complementary Feeding' in a Tertiary Care Hospital in Western Maharashtra

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**Abstract:** Background: Food that is offered to complement breast milk in order to meet baby's growing needs is called 'complementary food'. All National surveys have shown that gradual introduction of semisolids from six months has not been effectively communicated. Nurses play a major role in communicating these messages to mothers as having more opportunities to do so. It becomes essential that they should have the correct Knowledge and Attitude about Complementary Feeding. Hence, the present study is carried out to assess the same. Objectives: 1. To determine the level of knowledge and attitude about complementary feeding among the nursing staff. 2. To identify the areas where rectification is needed. Methodology: A cross sectional study was carried out in 100 nurses of a tertiary care hospital in Western Maharashtra during August 2014 using a semi-structured, pre-tested questionnaire. Results: 83% of participants were females. The correct age of initiation of complementary feeding, benefits of breastfeeding during 2nd year and total recommended duration of breastfeeding was not known to majority of the participants. 70% were aware of the foods to be given and age wise proportion of breast feeding & complementary feeding sessions. Also 32% of participants thought that ANC clinic is the only place to give such advice. Conclusions: The knowledge regarding complementary feeding was not optimum.

**Keywords:** Complementary feeding, nursing staff, knowledge and attitude, IYCF.

### INTRODUCTION

India contributes to 25% of the over 6.9 million under-5 deaths occurring worldwide every year (Park K, 2013). About 50% of the childhood deaths in India are attributable to malnutrition. Appropriate feeding practices are of fundamental importance for the survival, growth, development, health & nutrition of infants & young children (BPNI, 2013). Food that is offered to complement breast milk in order to meet baby's growing needs is called 'complementary food'. All National surveys have shown that gradual introduction of semisolids from six months has not been effectively communicated (NNMB Reports). Many studies were found on knowledge and attitude of mothers about complimentary feeding but very rare studies done on nurses about their knowledge and attitude towards complimentary feeding. Nurses play a major role in communicating these messages to mothers as having more opportunities to do so. It becomes essential that they should know the correct Knowledge

and have positive Attitude about Complementary Feeding. Hence, the present study is carried out to assess the same.

### OBJECTIVES

- To determine the level of knowledge and attitude about complementary feeding among the nursing staff.
- To identify the areas where rectification is needed.

### METHODOLOGY

**Study Design :** This is a cross-sectional study.

**Study Area :** Study was carried out in a tertiary care hospital in Western Maharashtra.

**Study period :** A month of August 2014 was used to collect the data for the study.

**Study population:** Nursing staff of a tertiary care hospital was selected as a study population.

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**Sample size:** A purposive sample of 100 nurses has been selected for the study.

**Data collection:** A semi-structured, pre-tested questionnaire is used to collect the data. Questionnaire included the basic sociodemographic variables (like age, gender, education, marital status and work experience etc.) and questions regarding knowledge and attitude. Questions were formed by using the IYCF (Infant Young Child Feeding) guide. The questionnaire was validated from the experts. Then it was used to

collect the data. 100 nurses who were willing to participate were included in the study.

**Ethical consideration:** Prior permission from the concerned authority was taken before the study. Ethical permission was obtained from the institutional ethical committee.

Data obtained was compiled and analysed by using Microsoft Excel 2010.

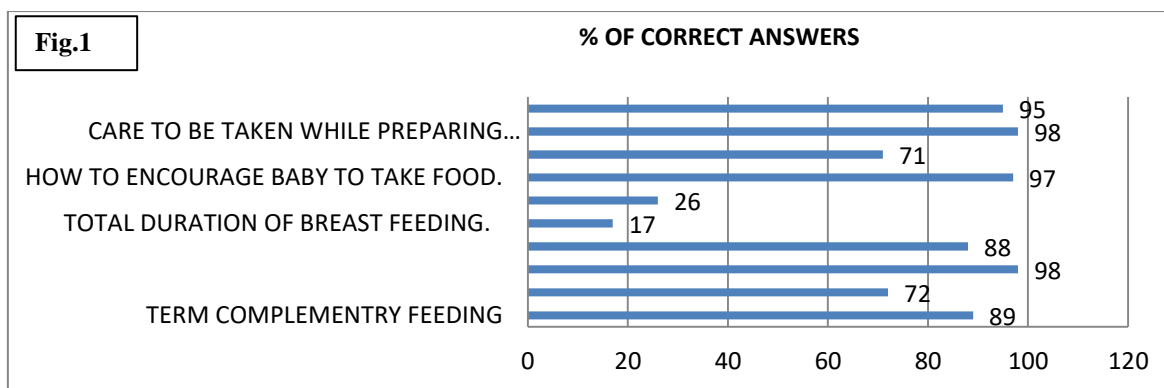
**RESULTS:**

**Table-1: Shows the socio-demographic variables of the study population.**

Socio-demographic profile (n=100)				
Age and sex wise distribution	Age groups	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)
	21-35	13(16.88)	66(83.11)	77(77.00)
	36-60	04(17.39)	19(82.60)	23(23.00)
	<b>Total</b>	17(17.00)	83(83.00)	100
Education	Bsc. Nursing			22(22.00)
	GNM/ RGNM/RRNM			72(72.00)
	MBA in health care			06(06.00)
Total Work experience	1-5 years			42(42.00)
	6-10 years			21(21.00)
	>10 years			37(37.00)
Departmental experience	Obs. Gyn./ paed/ UHC/ PHC/ RHTC			52(52.00)
	others			48(48.00)
<b>Total</b>				<b>100</b>

Age ranges from 21years to 60 years. Majority (77.00%) were from the age group of 21-35 years. 83.00% were females. Most of them are either GNM/RGNM or RRNM. 42% had less than 5 years of

experience. 52% had worked in the departments of Obstetrics, peads, UHC, RHTC or PHC which are related to our topic.



**Figure 1: Shows the percentages of the study subjects giving correct answers.**

89% were able to answer correctly about term complimentary feeding. 95% have answered correctly that the best way to give complimentary feed as a 1<sup>st</sup> meal. 98% knew the care taken during preparation of food like hygiene. While 71% knew age wise changes of proportion of the feeds with breast feeding. 97% had the knowledge of correct ways to encourage the baby to take food. Only 26% were aware of the benefits of the breast feeding at 2<sup>nd</sup> year of life. Also only 17% knew

that the total duration of breast feeding should be at least for 2years. Reasons to start the complimentary feeding at 6months were known to 88% of the nurses. 98% knew about exclusive breast feeding for 6 months. But 72% knew the correct age of initiation of complimentary feeding. Source of information was stated as CMEs by 52% of the participants while 48% stated it as a part of their education.



The correct age of initiation of complementary feeding, benefits of breastfeeding during 2<sup>nd</sup> year and total recommended duration of breastfeeding was not known to majority of the participants. The source of information was stated as CMEs. 70% were aware of the home made foods to be given and age wise changes in the proportion of breast feeding & complementary feeding sessions. Still 34% preferred liquid diet over semisolid for the baby of 6-9 months age as a complementary food, which will fill the stomach early & less energy will be provided. Most of them have positive attitude towards updating their knowledge. Only 52% of the participants had worked in the pediatrics, gynecology, UHC & PHC fields & also 32% of participants thought that ANC clinic is the only place to give such advice about complimentary feeding. Most found myths like prelacteal feeds, discarding colostrum, preference of bottle feeding over bowl spoon etc. as unacceptable. Findings are coinciding with those of knowledge and attitude study of health workers by Okolo SN (2002).

#### CONCLUSION

- Opportunities to educate mothers about proper complimentary feeding are being missed.
- Nurses had positive attitude about complimentary feeds.
- There is a scope for improvement in knowledge regarding complementary feeding.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Regular training and re-training about IYCF should be offered to the nursing staff.
- The training needs to contain a mix of theory, practical exercises (especially role plays), a standardising exercise as well as a written or verbal test so that nurses can use the knowledge & skills gained in such training to promote, support & protect the healthy complementary feeding practices both at the health facilities & communities.

#### REFERENCES

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