

6th International Conference on

EPIDEMIOLOGY & PUBLIC HEALTH

October 23-25, 2017 | Paris, France

IMPACT OF FEEDING PRACTICES ON HEALTH AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF THE CHILDREN IN URBAN AND RURAL HARYANA

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Background: Infant feeding practices are directly linked to nutritional status of the child. About 2/3rd of deaths in young children occur due to inappropriate feeding practices.

Aims & Objectives: To study impact of feeding practices on health and nutritional status of the children.

Materials & Methods: It was community based cross-sectional study conducted among 1267 children between age group of 0-24 months in the urban and rural field practice areas of Department of Community Medicine, Maharishi Markandeshwar Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Mullana, District Ambala, Haryana. A self-designed semi structured questionnaire was used to assess mother's knowledge, trends and determinants of infant and young child feeding practices and this was followed by anthropometry.

Results: In the current study it was observed that 33.1%, 44.1% and 14.4% children were underweight, stunted and wasted respectively. Factors like mother's education, occupation and type of family significantly ($p < 0.001$) influenced nutritional status of the child as 39.8% underweight children belonged to mothers who were educated up to high school only; also 35.7% underweight children were more in category of unemployed mothers. Feeding practices like feeding colostrum, duration of breastfeeding and time of initiation of complimentary feeds significantly ($p < 0.005$) influenced weight and height of the child. Also, exclusively breastfed children had significantly ($p < 0.001$) less episodes of diarrhea as compared to non-breastfed counterparts.

Conclusion: Feeding practices significantly influence health and nutritional status of the child. Therefore, mothers must be correctly educated regarding right feeding practices.

Biography

Harshdeep Joshi has been working as an Assistant Professor in Department of Community Medicine in Punjab Institute of Medical Sciences. She graduated from Jammu and Kashmir and thereafter pursued MD in Community Medicine. Her main area of interest is Mother and Child Health and her thesis topic was "An assessment of Trends in Infant and Young Child feeding Practices among Rural and Urban Mothers of Haryana and its impact on health and nutritional status of the child using newly developed WHO Indicators". She has presented Seminars on: Pedagogy, Infant feeding practices, Training on Public Health Nutrition, National Population Policy and Revised National Tuberculosis Program. She has also presented at Journal Clubs on various related topics. She has a versatile research work with more than 10 publications to her credit which were published in journals of international repute. Her research work mainly focuses on vitamin D deficiency in women, adolescent health, maternal and child health. She is also a Member of Medical Education Unit in her Institution and has organized CME on Women's Health. She has also written articles in different newspapers and is a proactive teacher.

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