

SUMMARY

In an attempt to clarify the practices of breast feeding among Egyptian mothers and thier determinants, a thousand and two mothers who have given birth to children and passing the first three to six months after delivery were studied concerning their social and biological status, their knowledge, attitude and practice towards breast feeding, their affective trait and finally the attitude of their husbands towards breast feeding. The above criteria were studied and correlated to the pattern of feeding. It was found that :

I- Two main patterns of breast feeding were recognized, the first was those mothers who practiced breast feeding alone or with some solid food supplementations other than milk for at least the first six months of their infants' age "exclusive breast feeding", the second was those mothers who introduced artificial milks with their breast milk before their infants reached the age of six months "mixed feeding". The exclusive group represented 60% of the studied sample, while the mixed group represented the remaining 40%.

II- Most of the rural mothers were exclusive breast feeders (64.5%), while a considerable percentage of urban mothers were mixed feeders (48%).

III- Biological score of the mother correlated significantly with the pattern of feeding. The higher the biological score, the more the practice of exclusive breast feeding and the less the introduction of artificial milks (Biological score 25.5 ± 3.7 , 24.3 ± 4 exclusive and mixed respectively $P < 0.05$).

IV- Social score of the studied mothers were found to be significantly lower in mothers practicing exclusive breast feeding (12.8 ± 5.1) than that of mothers introducing artificial milks (14 ± 4.5) " $P < 0.005$ ".

V- Score of knowledge among the studied mothers did not correlate with the pattern of feeding (82.2 ± 13.8 , 80 ± 12.2 exclusive and mixed respectively $P > 0.05$).

VI- Score of practice of the exclusive breast feeders was significantly higher than the score of the mothers using artificial milks (57.7 ± 9.5 , 49.9 ± 10.4 exclusive and mixed respectively $P < 0.001$).

VII- Score of attitude of the mothers towards breast feeding was found to correlate with the pattern of feeding. The more the positive attitude towards breast feeding, the more the practice and vice versa (4 ± 3.2 , 3.4 ± 3.1 exclusive and mixed respectively $P < 0.01$).

VIII- The attitude of the father towards breast feeding was found to have no significant correlation to the pattern of feeding (7.1 ± 3.7 , 7.5 ± 3.8 exclusive, mixed respectively $P > 0.05$).

IX- The relation of the affective trait of the studied mothers to the pattern of feeding showed that, the percentage of high score of hysteria, anxiety and psychosomatic disorders among mothers who introduced artificial milks (21.7%, 28.2%, 41.3% respectively) was higher than among exclusive breast feeders (7.8%, 18.2%, 37% respectively). On the other hand, the percentage of high score of obsession, phobia and depression among, exclusive breast feeders (42.2%, 40.3%, 57.1% respectively) was higher than among those who introduced artificial milks (34.8%, 26.1%, 47.8% respectively).

X- The impact of pattern of feeding on growth parameters was also studied and it was found that, children who were breast fed were superior to those who were artificially or mixed fed as:

1- Weight: Babies with mixed feeding lost 18 percentiles of weight for age (from 45 to 27) from birth till age of six months, while those who were breast fed gained 13 percentiles of weight for age throughout the same period (from 55 to 68).

2- Length: Babies with mixed feeding lost 10 percentiles of length for age (from 50 to 40) from birth till age of six months, while breast fed babies gained about 8 percentiles of length for age throughout the same period.

3- Head circumference: The change in head circumference was minimal, as mixed-fed babies lost about 8 percentiles of

head circumference for age (from 43 to 35) from birth till age of six months, while breast-fed babies maintained the same percentile of head circumference for age throughout the same period.