

SUMMARY

Since the very beginning of human existence on earth, weaning has been considered a nutritional dilemma. It represents one of the most crucial dietary events in infant's life. Weaning is the gradual replacement of breast milk with another food until it finally leads to cessation of breast milk. It is also a vulnerable period in an infant's life during which the child is still growing rapidly and just about to run out of maternal protective antibodies. Weaning period is a hazardous period which needs special care to avoid different problems ranging from malnutrition gastroenteritis to food allergy which are harmful not only to the child but to all the family. So that, this period needs cooperation between all family members to be a successful period.

Aim of the study :

The aim of this study was to:

- Assess mother's knowledge and practice regarding weaning.
- Identify problems associated with mother's weaning faults.

Subjects and Methods:

Setting :

The study was carried out at outpatient clinics of Pediatric Hospital, Benha University.

Subject :

The study included (200) mothers of children during weaning time (the first two years of life).

Tool:

The tool of data collection included a structured questionnaire sheet was designed, adjusted and prepared in Arabic language by the researcher after reviewing a related literature. The sheet comprised the following data items:

- 1- Socio-demographic data about mothers and their children such as age, level of education, occupation, sex.
- 2- Mothers' needs deficit about weaning of their children which included concept and timing.
- 3- Mothers' practice regarding care, preparation and technique of weaning.

The findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

- 1- The mean age of children was 10.3 ± 5.7 months. While the mean age of mothers was 29.3 ± 6.9 years.
- 2- The main source of mothers information about weaning of their children were obtained mainly from their own mothers (41.5%).
- 3- Knowledge of mothers about the concept of weaning was inadequate, where 52.5% of mothers had incorrect concept about the meaning of weaning.

- 4- Mothers can't know the proper time of start weaning, where 10% of mothers had correct knowledge about time to start weaning.
- 5- About weaning technique, 24.5% of mothers mentioned correct weaning technique.
- 6- The study reflected that 50% of mothers mentioned that lack of knowledge about importance of breast-feeding, working and thinking that early weaning is useful for baby are all the causes of early weaning.
- 7- About mothers' practice toward infants' feeding, 79.5% of mothers started infant feeding after birth by breast-feeding, while 50.5% of them gave exclusive breast-feeding during the first six months.
- 8- Mothers' practice toward type of food at start weaning reflected that 63% of them started by fluids.
- 9- The study reflected that there were many problems occurred during the weaning period, while gastro-enteritis is the main health problem (39.5%).
- 10- The most common substance used to stop breast-feeding was aloe (55.5%).
- 11- There was highly statistical significant ($P < 0.001$) difference between mothers' residence and patterns of their infants feeding.
- 12- This study revealed that there was highly statistical significant ($P < 0.001$) difference between methods and

technique of weaning in relation to level of mothers education and their residence.

- 13- The present study showed that there was statistical significant ($P < 0.001$) difference between mothers level of education and residence in relation to types of food at start weaning

Conclusion:

We can conclude from this study that, the majority of mothers who are included in the study need knowledge and practice about weaning of their infants. Meanwhile, the main source of mothers' information about weaning obtained from their own mothers, physician and neighbor. The study showed also that there were many problems facing the child during weaning period, where gastro-enteritis was considered the health problem during this period. Thus they need information about the proper technique of weaning.

Recommendation :

In the light of the findings of the current study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- 1) Provide information for mothers about weaning of their infants through television, radio, news paper,, etc.
- 2) Mothers' wrong beliefs about weaning should be corrected through health teaching .

- 3) Providing educational programs for mothers to help them in selection, preparation, storage and serving of weaning foods.
- 4) Mothers should be instructed about the duration of breast feeding and the onset of weaning which should be gradual and ranged between 4 – 6 months from the child age. It also should not be interrupted or interfered with breast feeding.
- 5) Mothers should be supported and encouraged to breast feed their children through legalization such as nursing breaks, during work hours or a shorter work day for nursing mothers, this is for all types of work.
- 6) Mothers should be advised that the baby is not allowed to take his bottle at bed time because this may delayed weaning.
- 7) Extra-instructions should be given to expectant mothers during antenatal visits regarding correct weaning practices, especially highlighting the correct age at which to wean. These instructions could be reinforced and supplemented by educational pamphlets.
- 8) Nurses should play a key role in the health teaching and counseling mothers both in urban and rural areas.
- 9) Nurses in the out patient clinic or pediatrics department, should be trained well and supplied with information and educational weaning programs as they are the main source of mothers' information during the weaning period.

- 10) It is important that health care providers become aware of misconception of weaning practice, so that guidance can be given.