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Infant weaning knowledge and practice among mothers attending infant welfare clinic in three primary healthcare centres in Ikenne local government area, Ogun state, Nigeria

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Abstract

Objective: Infant weaning is the introduction of supplementary diets to a child's food after the first six months of life. Early introduction of supplementary diet and incorrect weaning practices are commonly found in communities around the world. Poor breastfeeding and weaning practices are the prime causes of malnutrition in the first two years of life and information gap exists in relation to how and when weaning takes place. The study explored infant weaning knowledge and practice among mothers attending infant welfare clinic in three primary healthcare centres in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Method: This study adopted a descriptive method. Researchers included 100 mothers attending infant welfare clinic using simple random sampling. Participants completed a developed questionnaire to assess their knowledge and practice regarding infant weaning. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results: Result showed that majority 50(50%) of participants had moderate knowledge regarding infant weaning while majority 66(66%) had low practice concerning infant weaning. Finding showed a statistically significant relationship between occupation and weaning practices among mothers ($P=0.000$); finding showed statistically significant relationship between educational level and weaning practices among mothers ($P=0.000$); finding showed no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and weaning practices among mothers ($P=0.723$); finding showed a statistically significant relationship between mothers knowledge level and weaning practices ($P=0.001$).

Conclusion: Infant weaning knowledge and practice among mothers attending infant welfare clinic is moderate. The study recommended that nurses should regularly train mothers on infant weaning to improve their knowledge and practice concerning infant weaning.

Keywords: Descriptive study, supplementary diet, simple random sampling, infant welfare clinic

Introduction

Weaning is a process by which foods other than breast milk is introduced gradually into baby's diet after the first six months of life to initially complement the breast milk and then to wean totally off breast milk^[1]. Adequate nutrition during infancy and early childhood is essential for growth, health and development of children to their full potential^[2]. Infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months followed by breastfeeding along with complementary foods for up to two years of age or beyond^[3]. The first two years of life are critical stages for a child's growth and development. Any damage caused by nutritional deficiencies during this period could lead to impaired cognitive development, compromised educational achievement and low economic productivity. Correct infant weaning confers both short-term and long-term benefits to a child such as reduction in rate of infections and mortality among infants, improvement in mental and motor development^[4].

Weaning has been one of the most wrongly practised processes in the developmental stages of the children. It was observed that mothers give their infant other food apart from breast milk before the first six months of life which produces a negative effect on the infants health and wellbeing. Gradual weaning is recommended during the period from 6 months to 2 years which allows for the child to still receive the benefits from breastfeeding, while also

consuming the necessary nutrients from the complementary foods^[3]. Study showed that 52% of mothers abruptly weaned their children off breast milk completely while only 11.6% gradually weaned their children off breast milk^[5].

The most vulnerable period for developing malnutrition remains the weaning period. Malnourished children often suffer the loss of precious mental capacities and fall ill more often but if they survive, they grow up with lasting mental or physical disabilities^[6]. Poor quality of weaning foods and improper weaning practices predispose infants to malnutrition, growth retardation, infection, diseases and high mortality. Malnutrition, poor mental as well as physical status of the infant has persisted in infant welfare clinics^[5]. This suggests a fundamental problem.

Researcher through clinical experience has also observed high malnutrition, growth retardation, poor mental and physical status in children brought to infant welfare clinic by mothers. These may be attributed to low knowledge and practice concerning infant weaning among mothers. Hence, the need to explore infant weaning knowledge and practice among mothers attending infant welfare clinic in three primary healthcare centres in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Methods

Study design

The study adopted a descriptive method to explore infant weaning knowledge and practice among mothers attending infant welfare clinic in three primary healthcare centres in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria between January and March 2017.

Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Babcock University Health Research Ethics Committee (BUHREC590/16) and permission was obtained from the management of Ikenne Local Government. Participants were adequately informed about the study and consent was obtained before data was collected. Information obtained from the participants was kept confidential and the right to withdraw from the study at any point by participants was respected.

Population

The study population was 150 mothers attending three primary healthcare centres in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State (50 mothers from Ikenne primary healthcare centre, 60 mothers from Iperu primary healthcare centre and 40 mothers from Ilishan remo primary healthcare centre).

Inclusion criteria: Mothers with a child whose age is within 6-24 months.

Exclusion criteria: Mothers with a child having abnormalities which affect feeding.

Sample size and sampling Technique

Sample size was determined using Leslie Kish formula. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 100 participants proportionally from the three primary healthcare centres (34 participants from Ikenne primary healthcare centre, 39 participants from Iperu primary health centre and 27 participants from Ilishan remo primary health centre) for the study.

Instrument and procedure

A developed questionnaire consisting of three subscales and 30 items was utilized for the study. The subscales included socio-demographic data, infant weaning knowledge and practice regarding infant weaning. There were 8 questions on demographic data, 15 questions on infant weaning knowledge and 7 questions on infant weaning practice. Knowledge score of participants below 50% was categorized as low knowledge level, knowledge score of participants between 50% to 70% was categorized as moderate knowledge level and knowledge score of participants above 70% was categorized as high knowledge level. Practice score of participants below 50% was categorized as low practice level, practice score of participants between 50% to 70% was categorized as moderate practice level and practice score of participants above 70% was categorized as high practice level. Reliability of the questionnaire was determined using split-half method and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was 0.8.

Recruited participants were asked to complete the developed and structured questionnaire after they have been informed about the study and consent has been obtained to collect data on knowledge and practice regarding infant weaning at the infant welfare clinic. Home visit was done to also obtain data regarding infant weaning practice; frequency and type of weaning foods were confirmed. Data were processed using statistical package for social science (SPSS), version 21. Two research questions were answered using descriptive statistics and four hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of student t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Frequency and percentage showing demographic data of participants

Variables	Category	Frequency: N=100	Percentage %
Age	20-24 years	17	17%
	25-29 years	20	20%
	30-34 years	42	42%
	35-39 years	8	8%
	40-44 years	13	13%
Marital status	Married	89	89%
	Single	11	11%
Ethnicity	Yoruba	89	89%
	Hausa	3	3%
	Igbo	8	8%
	Occupation	Civil servant	20
	Self employed	58	58%
	Unemployed	22	22%
Religion	Islam	36	36%
	Christianity	64	64%
Educational Qualification	Primary	12	12%
	Secondary	52	52%
	Tertiary	26	26%
	No formal education	10	10%

Table 1 shows that 17 participants (17%) were between age 20-24 years, 20 participants (20%) were between age 25-29 years, 42 participants (42%) were between age 30-34 years, 8 participants (8%) were between age 35-39 years and 13 participants (13%) were between age 40-44 years.

Result reveals that 89 participants (89%) were married and 11 participants (11%) were single. Result shows that 89 participants (89%) were Yorubas, 3 participants (3%) were Hausa and 8 participants (8%) were Igbos. Result shows that 20 participants (20%) were civil servants, 58 participants (58%) were self-employed and 22 participants (22%) were unemployed. Result shows that 64 participants (64%) were

Christians and 36 participants (36%) were Muslims. Result reveals that 12 participants (12%) were primary school certificate holders, 52 participants (52%) were secondary school certificate holders, 26 participants (26%) were tertiary school certificate holders and 10 participants (10%) had no formal education.

Table 2: descriptive statistics of participants knowledge regarding infant weaning

	N	Maximum point on scale	Mean	Std. Error.	Std. Deviation
Participants knowledge regarding infant weaning	100	9	28.5	.266	2.66

Table 2 reveals that the mean knowledge score of participants regarding infant weaning was 28.5 and standard deviation was 2.66.

Table 3: Participants knowledge category regarding infant weaning

Category	Classification	Frequency N=100	Percentage %
< 50%	Low	8	8%
50 - 70 %	Moderate	50	50%
> 70 %	High	42	42%
Total		100	100

Table 3 reveals that 42(42%) participants had high knowledge level regarding infant weaning, 50(50%) had moderate knowledge level and 8(8%) had low knowledge level regarding infant weaning.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of participants practice concerning infant weaning

	N	Maximum point on scale	Mean	Std. Error.	Std. Deviation
Participants practice regarding infant weaning	100	4	10.32	.171	1.71

Table 4 shows that the mean practice score of participants regarding infant weaning was 10.32 and the standard deviation was 1.71.

Table 5: Participants practice category regarding infant weaning

Category	Classification	Frequency N=100	Percentage %
< 50 %	Low	66	31%
50 - 70 %	Moderate	31	66%
> 70	High	3	3%
Total		100	100

Table 5 shows that 3(3%) participants had high practice level regarding infant weaning, 31(31%) had moderate practice level and 66(66%) had low practice level regarding infant weaning.

Table 6: Inferential statistics concerning occupation and infant weaning practice among mothers

		Weaning Practises
Occupation and infant weaning practice	Pearson correlation	0.035
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004
	N	100

Table 6 reveals that there is significant relationship between participants occupation and practice regarding infant weaning (p=0.004).

Table 7: Inferential statistics regarding educational level and infant weaning practice among participants

		Weaning Practises
Educational level and infant weaning practice	Pearson correlation	0.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	100

Table 7 reveals that there is significant relationship between participants educational level and practice regarding infant weaning (p=0.000).

Table 8: Inferential statistics regarding ethnicity and infant weaning practice among participants

		Weaning Practises
Ethnicity and infant weaning practice	Pearson correlation	0.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.723
	N	100

Table 8 reveals that there is no significant relationship between participants ethnicity and infant weaning practice (p=0.723).

Table 9: Inferential statistics concerning participants knowledge level and infant weaning practice.

		Weaning Practises
knowledge and infant weaning practice	Pearson correlation	0.086
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001
	N	100

Table 9 shows that there is significant relationship between participants knowledge level and infant weaning practice (p=0.001).

Discussion of findings

There were more participants between age 30-34 years during data collection. This finding disagrees with a previous descriptive study in which there were more participants between age 25-29 years during data collection [7]. There were more married participants during data collection. This finding agrees with a previous descriptive study in which there were more married participants during data collection [7]. There were more Yoruba participants during data collection. This finding agrees with a previous descriptive study in which there were more Yoruba participants during data collection [7]. There were more self-employed participants during data collection. This finding agrees with a previous descriptive study in which there were more self-employed participants during data collection [7]. There were more Christian participants during data collection. This finding agrees with a previous descriptive study in which there were more Christian participants during data collection [7]. There were more secondary school certificate holders during data collection. This finding agrees with a previous descriptive study in which there were more secondary school certificate holders during data collection [7]. Result showed that majority of the participants had moderate knowledge level regarding infant weaning. This finding is due to the participants' exposure to infant weaning education and training before the study. Result agrees with previous descriptive study in which

majority of participants had moderate knowledge level regarding infant weaning ^[8]. Result showed that majority of the participants had low practice level regarding infant weaning. This finding is due to the participants' exposure to infant weaning education and training before the study. Result agrees with previous descriptive study in which majority of participants had low practice level regarding infant weaning ^[8].

Result shows that participants' occupation has significant relationship with infant weaning practice. This finding agrees with previous descriptive study in which participants' occupation had significant relationship with infant weaning practice ^[9]. Result shows that participants' educational level has significant relationship with infant weaning practice. This finding agrees with previous descriptive study in which participants educational level had significant relationship with infant weaning practice ^[9].

Result shows that participants' ethnicity has no significant relationship with infant weaning practice. This finding disagrees with previous descriptive study in which participants' ethnicity had significant relationship with infant weaning practice ^[9]. Result shows that participants' knowledge level regarding infant weaning has significant relationship with infant weaning practice. This finding agrees with previous descriptive study in which participants' knowledge level regarding infant weaning had significant relationship with infant weaning practice ^[9].

Summary

The focus of the study was to explore infant weaning knowledge and practice among mothers attending infant welfare clinic in three primary healthcare centres in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria. Participants had moderate knowledge and low practice level regarding infant weaning. Participants' occupation, educational level and knowledge level had significant relationship with infant weaning while participants ethnicity had no significant relationship with infant weaning.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, infant weaning knowledge among participants is moderate while infant weaning practice among participants is low. There is significant relationship between participants' occupation, educational level, knowledge level and infant weaning practice while ethnicity is not significantly related to infant weaning practice. Hence, occupation, educational level and knowledge level is significantly related to infant weaning practice while ethnicity is not significantly related to infant weaning practice.

Recommendations

Based on findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Nurses should educate and train mothers on appropriate infant weaning practices which is necessary to improve their knowledge and practice regarding infant weaning.
- Hospital should regularly organize programs to educate and train mothers on infant weaning which is necessary to improve their knowledge and practice regarding infant weaning.
- Awareness on infant weaning should be raised in infant welfare clinics and community centres to improve

mothers' knowledge and practice regarding infant weaning.

- Government should sponsor programs to create more awareness on infant weaning practice among mothers to improve their knowledge and practice regarding infant weaning.

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Competing interests

No competing interest existed throughout the study.

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