

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) of Female Nurses on Complementary Feeding

Childhood malnutrition is a major public health concern contributing to around 3.5 million death of children every year globally. Additionally, in 2020, children under age five found stunted & wasted in 149 & 45.4 million cases respectively. In Bangladesh around 600,000 children are affected by malnutrition while stunting affects 40% of children under age five. Poorly nourished child is believed to be less productive because of lack of cognitive & physical power. Moreover, they are more prone to sickness that creates a vicious cycle. The global target is to reduce 40% of stunting under age five within 2025.

According to the WHO: “Complimentary feeding is the process, starting when breast milk alone is no longer sufficient to meet the nutritional requirements of infants, and therefore other foods and liquids are needed, along with breast milk” Complementary feeding thereby bridges the gradual transition from exclusive breast feeding to extra foods required to fulfill the nutritional requirement of a growing child from six months of age. Complimentary feeding should start timely, must be adequate to provide sufficient energy, protein and micronutrients; be safe in respect that they are hygienically stored and prepared, and fed with clean hands using clean utensils and not bottles and teats and need to be properly fed- consistent with a child’s signals of appetite and satiety, and that meal frequency and feeding are suitable for age. Poor Complimentary feeding stem to increased risks of respiratory and gastrointestinal infections alongside mortality. Only 71% of Bangladeshi infants consume appropriate complementary foods by 6 to 8 months of age and often ‘fall off the growth curve’ once Complimentary feeding starts. As a global public health recommendation, Bangladesh adopted the strategy of exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months of life and Infant and Young Children Feeding (IYCF) guidelines, (WHO, 2010) that is infants should receive safe and nutritionally adequate complementary foods while breastfeeding continues for up to 2 years of age or beyond to achieve optimal growth, development and health.

Appropriate Complimentary feeding not only requires sufficient household food availability but also adequate nutritional knowledge application by caregivers is compelled. While extensive studies exist on Breast feeding practices, Complimentary feeding remains less extensively studied especially on issues how the information can be made accessible and available for the families. Health professionals particularly nurses pass long contact time with the mothers and can play an important role to disseminate important health messages. More over positive attitude among nurses can strongly influence mothers for infant and young child feeding. The article focusing on the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Female Nurses on Complementary Feeding showed 98.9% of the female nurses know timely initiation of complementary feeding is essential for child’s growth and development. Almost all of them held the idea that home-made complementary food is better than that of commercial one. But a significant number (67.4% of the female nurses) started complimentary feeding before completion of 6 months of age which is an inappropriate practice. The food hygiene, frequency, amount, adequate energy dense and food diversity remained important issues in Complimentary feeding and those were not properly practiced by female nurses.

Knowledge, Attitude and practice of Female nurses on complementary feeding is quite high. It is about 65% others they have also knowledge regarding this but they need more attention and positive attitude.

About this study, it is timely and adequately done. Most of the female nurses have adequate knowledge and attitude towards complementary feeding. Hygiene is also important component to achieve desired goal.

Govt. should take proper strategy to ensure the practices of complimentary feeding among care givers with preference to female nurses who are commonly caring the young children. Thereby make them confident

enough to disseminate the appropriate information about complimentary feeding to the mothers and families. If we are keen to build a healthy nation and to reach the target of SDG, we should ensure the complementary feeding as a priority.

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Professor Brig Gen. (Retd.) Mohammad Aminul Islam

Faculty, Department of Health Informatics

Bangladesh University of Health Science

Mobile: 01769035566

Email: maislam591@gmail.com

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