

Assessment of knowledge regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices among Anganwadi workers in a selected rural area in Meghalaya

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Abstract

Introduction: Nutrition is essential during early years of life for children to survive, grow and develop into healthy adults. Infant and Young Child Feeding practices (IYCF) is the global public health recommendation where infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life to achieve optimal growth. Global nutrition report shows that 34.7% of children under-five years of age are stunting and 17.3% of children under-five years of age are under-weight. Anganwadi workers play an important role in promoting the community based IYCF practices in India.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 99 Anganwadi workers in Mawryngkneng Block ICDS office, using total enumerative census sampling technique in March, 2021. Data was collected using structured questionnaire consisting of two sections; section I: socio-demographics characteristics of Anganwadi workers and Section II: Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) method on knowledge regarding IYCF practices. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Result: Data reveals that out of 99 Anganwadi workers, 86(86.9%) have adequate knowledge, 12(12.1%) have moderate knowledge and only one participants (01.0%) have inadequate knowledge. The knowledge regarding IYCF practices on different domains Anganwadi workers responded correctly on feeding in other situations (94.6%), correct attachment for breastfeeding (90.58%), early initiation of breastfeeding (86.8%), complementary feeding (86.60%), exclusive breastfeeding (83.5%) , and the least answered correctly was about expressed breastmilk (60.14%). There was significant association between knowledge and age, level of education and year of experiences of the Anganwadi workers at $p \leq 0.05$.

In the present study, it was found that majority of the Anganwadi workers have adequate knowledge on IYCF practices. The study recommended that training and in-service education programs should be strengthened to promote and update the knowledge of Anganwadi workers about Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices.

Keywords: Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices, Anganwadi workers and Knowledge

Introduction

Malnutrition reflects an imbalance of nutrients that may be due to inappropriate intake or/and inefficient biological utilization due to the external and internal environment. It includes both undernutrition and overnutrition. Two third of malnutrition cases occur due to inappropriate feeding practices during the first year of life.

Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices was developed by World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in 2002. It is a set of recommendations for proper feeding of infant and young children under two years which include early initiation of breastfeeding within one hour after birth, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, continuation of breastfeeding till two years of age and providing adequate and appropriate complementary feeding.

Anganwadi workers (AWW) are the community-based voluntary frontline worker of the Integrated Child Development Service program. They are selected from the community; they play a pivotal role due to their close and continuous contact with the beneficiaries. They monitors the growth of children, organizes supplementary feeding, helps in organizing immunization sessions, distributes vitamin A, iron and folic acid supplements, treats minor ailments, and refers cases to medical facilities. Achieving the goals of ICDS program goals mainly depends heavily on the effectiveness of the AWWs, which, in turn, depends on their knowledge, attitude, and practice. Theirs', "knowledge, awareness, skills, practices, attitudes and motivation play an important role in effective counselling and delivery of

messages related to optimal IYCF. The field supervision is usually done by Child Development Project Officer (CDPO).

Objectives

Primary objectives:

i) To assess the knowledge regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices among anganwadi workers in a selected rural area in Meghalaya.

Secondary objectives:

i) To find the association between the knowledge regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices and demographic variables.

Methodology

In this study, Analytical Study (cross sectional study) design was adopted among Anganwadi workers in a selected rural area Meghalaya, East Khasi Hills District. Total of 99 Anganwadi Workers were selected in this study using total enumerative census sampling technique. The study was conducted from 8th March to 4th /April/ 2021. The research tools, consisted of socio-demographics variables and Structured Knowledge questionnaires were validated by experts from various departments like Departments of Paediatrics, Department of Community medicine. Purpose of the study was explained, confidentiality was assured, and Informed consent was taken from the Anganwadi workers. Reliability of the tool was established by split half method using Karl Pearson's coefficient correlation formula. Pilot study was conducted and found to be feasible to be carried in the main setting as proposed. Data was collected using structured knowledge questionnaires regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding practices (IYCF). It comprises the item of six domains. These different domains are arranged in the form of Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). They

are divided into different stations. Section I: socio-demographic variables which include 4 items, Section II: Structured knowledge questionnaires consisting of 20 items. Each question was given one mark for a correct answer and zero for the incorrect answer. The Level of Knowledge Range was distributed as Adequate (21-28) Moderate (11-20) Inadequate (0-10). The Data was analysed using Descriptive (Frequency and Percentage) and Inferential Statistics (Fisher Exact Test).

Result

Section I: Findings Related To Socio-Demographic Variables of Anganwadi Workers

The data shows that, out of 99 participants, majority are in the age group of 24-33 years (50.5%). In marital status majority of the participants are married 91 (91.9%). About 55(55.5%) are below class 12 and 54(54.4%) are above class 12. Majority 61(61.6%) of the participants have 1-10 years Of experience.

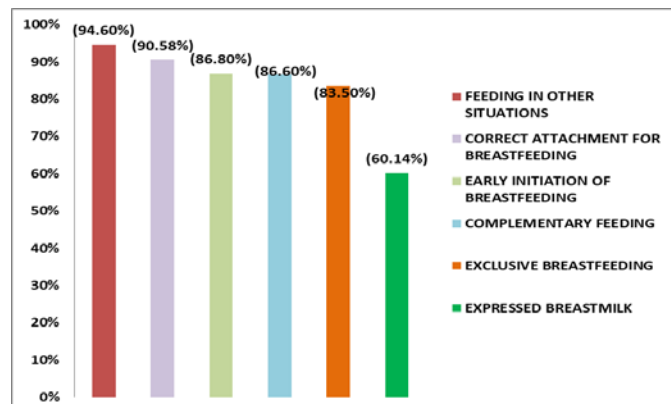
Section II: Findings Related To Knowledge Level of the Participants Regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices

Table No. 1 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Knowledge Levels of participants regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices (IYCF) N=99

Knowledge level	Frequency (f)	(%)
Inadequate (0-10)	01	01.0%
Moderate (10-20)	12	12.1%
Adequate (21-28)	86	86.9%

Table 1 depicts that majority of the Anganwadi workers have adequate knowledge (86.9%) on Infant and Young Child Feeding practices.

Section III: Findings Related To Knowledge On Different Domains Of Infant And Young Child Feeding (Iycf) Practices N=99



The data shows that majority of the Anganwadi workers (94.6%) had knowledge about feeding in other situations, correct attachment for breastfeeding (90.5%), early initiation of breastfeeding (86.8%), complementary feeding (86.60%), exclusive breastfeeding (83.5%) and whereas (60.14%) had knowledge about expressed breastmilk.

Section IV: Findings Related To Item Wise Frequency And Percentage Distribution Of Knowledge Score According To Domains Of Infant And Young Child Feeding (Iycf) Practices

Data shows that majority of the Anganwadi workers 80(80.80%) had response correctly about the early initiation of breastfeeding within one hour , 98(98.98%) pre-lacteal feeds, 97(97.97%) about exclusive breastfeeding, 92(92.92%) feeding the infant other than breastmilk, 96(96.96%) about good sign of attachment for breastfeeding, 94 (94.94%) on advantages of breastfeeding, 89(89.89%) expressed breastmilk for working mothers, 30(30.30%) on correct storage of expressed breastmilk and only 36(36.36%) about the correct consistency of complementary feeding. Data also reveals that 96(96.96%) about lactating mothers need to consult doctors before taking any medication,

96(96.96%) about the right technique to expel air and 89(89.89%) about low birth weight should feed only breast milk for the first six months.

Section V: Findings Related To The Association Between Knowledge On Infant And Young Child Feeding (IYCF) Practices And Selected Socio-Demographic Variables

The study showed that the calculated p value for age, level of education and years of experience was less than and equal to 0.05 $\{p \leq 0.05\}$ which depicts that there is association between knowledge and selected socio-demographics variables. It can be concluded that knowledge depend on age, level of knowledge and year of experience of Anganwadi workers.

Discussion

This study attempted to determine the knowledge regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding practices among Anganwadi workers, association of knowledge level with socio-demographics variables.

Data shows that the maximum number of the Anganwadi workers, 50(50.5%) are in the age group of 24-33 years. 91 (91.9%) of Anganwadi workers are married whereas Singh K Amanjot et al (2012) reported 52.7% were in the age group of more than 30 years.

This study Maximum number of the Anganwadi workers 61 (61.6%) had experience for 1-10 years and also similar to the study by Singh K Amanjot et al (2012) and Chaturvedi et al were 70% of Anganwadi workers had experience more than 10 years.

Data reveals that most of the Anganwadi workers 80.8% had knowledge about early initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth a similar findings by Singh K Amanjot et al (2012) reported 97.9% of the Anganwadi workers had correct knowledge that breastfeeding should immediately start after birth. And also supported by the

study conducted by Chandorkar Suneeta and Miyawala Tasneem (2014) 100% of the Anganwadi workers were aware about early initiation of breastfeeding within one hour after birth

Majority of the Anganwadi workers 98.9 % had knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding of the infants for months which is similar to the findings by Singh K Amanjot et al (2012) 99% of them had correct knowledge regarding exclusive breastfeeding.

The knowledge of Anganwadi workers regarding counselling the working mothers to express the breast milk was about 98.9% and only 30% had knowledge regarding storage of breastmilk. Whereas Chandorkar Suneeta and Miyawala Tasneem (2014) reported 53.3 % of the Anganwadi workers had knowledge about counselling the working mothers to expressed the breastmilk and 70% were aware about the correct storage of breastmilk whereas only 30% did not know that breastmilk can be expressed and stored in room temperature.

Data shows that only 36.3% had knowledge about correct consistency of complementary feeding and similar study by Chandorkar Suneeta and Miyawala Tasneem (2014) however reported 54% of the Anganwadi workers reported the correct consistency of complementary feed.

Most of the Anganwadi workers 96.9% can identify the correct method of burping, however a similar study conducted by Singh K Amanjot et al (2012) reported 68% of the Anganwadi workers believed that the child should burped after every feed.

The knowledge of the Anganwadi workers about feeding low birth weight baby only breastmilk is 89.9% which is consistent to the study by Singh Amanjot et al (2012) 92.8% of the Anganwadi workers believe that mother's

milk is better than cow's milk for the health of the baby for the first six months.

Conclusion

Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) is a critical component of care in childhood. It is a major determinant of short- and long-term health outcomes in children. The study reveals that majority of the Anganwadi worker had adequate knowledge regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices. The study also shows that the concept related to correct storage of expressed breast milk and consistency of complementary feeding is only 30.30% and 36.36%. The study also reveals that there is association between knowledge and age, level of education, year of experience of working as Anganwadi workers. Thus, from the above findings it can be concluded that provisions for training Anganwadi workers related Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices for improvement of their knowledge.

Ethical Clearance: taken from the institute Ethics Committee (IEC)(Human Studies), NEIGRIHMS, Shillong, Meghalaya

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