

## Mother's education and feeding practices of children of 0-2 years from selected areas of Al-Zaideyah Hodaidah Governorate of Yemen

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**ABSTRACT:** *Lack of awareness and misconception about adequate feeding practices are considered as the main underlying causes of inadequate breast feeding and complementary feeding. Young children between age group of 6 months to 24 months are most vulnerable to diseases. Children who are well-nourished during the first two years of life are likely to stay well-nourished for the rest of their childhood. WHO recommends that infants should be fed exclusively on breast milk from birth to six months of age; that is, they should be given no other liquids or solids than breast milk, not even water, during this period. After this initial period of exclusive breast-feeding, infant should continue to be breast-fed for up to two years of age or beyond, while receiving nutritionally adequate and safe complementary food. This study aimed to assess the feeding practices of 0-2 year's young children of selected areas of Yemen on the basis of mother's education.*

*Keywords: Breast feeding, Feeding practices, Maternal education, Colostrum, Yemen*

### INTRODUCTION

According to most recent guidelines of WHO and national guidelines for Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), breast feeding must be initiated within one hour of birth and exclusive breastfeeding should continue until six months of age. WHO recommends that the children receive nothing else but breast milk (exclusive breast feeding) for the first six months of life. Complementary foods should be introduced when a child is six months old to reduce the risk of malnutrition (LISGIS. Liberia 2007). Breast milk is best for baby during the first year of life. Breast feeding is superior to formula feeding (Wendy 2002). Breast milk provides a complete source of nutrition during the first six months of life, fulfils half of the child's nutritional requirements during the second six months of life and one-third of requirements in the second year of life (UNICEF 2006). Breast feeding is associated with significantly lower blood pressure levels in childhood (WHO/FAO 2003). Mother's milk is the most complete and beneficial early nutrition for children. Breast feeding is preferred as the first choice for most infants when available (Dekker 2003). Human milk enhances the immature immunology system of the neonate and strengthens host defence mechanisms against infective and other foreign agents (Prakash 2002). Breast feeding was found to reduce the occurrence of underweight among children (Salah et al. 2006). Breast feeding is the optimal method for feeding infants. All the nutritional needs of most of these children are provided by breast milk in the right amounts and duration (Salami 2006). Colostrum is the first milk

(Weston 2006; WHO 2000). Studies have shown that breast feeding alone provides the nutrition that meets all the infant's requirements in this age group (Gupta et al 2007). Infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months of life to achieve optimal growth, development, and health (World Bank 2007). Weaning is a critical time for child health because inadequate nutrition, infection, and psychological stress interact synergistically, magnifying the effects of each (Westview 2009). Breast feeding is the cultural norm in Uzbekistan (AIC. Uzbekistan 2002).

Different studies conducted in different countries indicate that, in Zimbabwe only 22 percent of babies are exclusively breastfed throughout the first six months of life (CSO. Zimbabwe 2005-06). In Indonesia a total of 62 percent of babies have begun breast feeding within the first day after birth (BPS. Indonesia 2007). In Zambia bottle feeding is not very common (CSO. Zambia 2007). In Ethiopia the use of a bottle with a nipple is not widespread (CSA & ORC Macro, Ethiopia 2005). This study attempts to understand the association between exclusive breast feeding practices and mother's education; and the association between bottle feeding and mother's education. The other area is to study the time of onset and termination of breast feeding with mother's education.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The total sample size is 208 children (0 to 2 years), 112 boys and 96 girls. Tools and techniques of data collection include Interview Schedule with focused variables on feeding practices and associated factors. Random sampling method is used for interviews of mothers inside the house.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Table No.1 and Graph No.1 shows the association between exclusive breast feeding and mother's education. 31 out 34 children (91.2%) belong to literate mothers received exclusive breast feeding from their mothers followed by 61 out of 174 children (35.1%) who belong to illiterate mothers. The exclusive breast feeding practices are seen higher among the literate mothers. The association between exclusive breast feeding and mother's education is highly significant  $P < 0.001$ .

**Table No.1 Association between exclusive breastfeeding and mother's education**

| Exclusive breastfeeding | Mother's education |           |            |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
|                         | Illiterate         | Literate  | Total      |
| Yes                     | 61(35.1)           | 31(91.2)  | 92(44.2)   |
| No                      | 113(64.9)          | 3(8.8)    | 116(55.8)  |
| Total                   | 174(100.0)         | 34(100.0) | 208(100.0) |

$\chi^2 = 36.9$  ;  $df=2$  ;  $P < 0.001$ ; Association is highly Significant

**Graph No.1 Association between exclusive breastfeeding and mother's education**

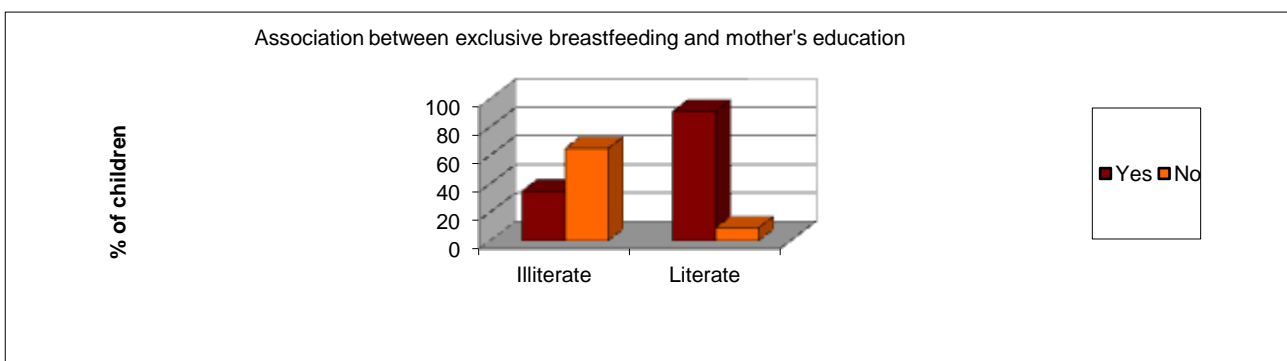


Table No.2 and Graph No.2 shows, the association between bottle feeding practices and mother's education. 113 out 174 children (65.0%) belong to illiterate mothers and depend fully on bottle feeding, followed by, only 3 out of 34 children (8.8%) belong to literate mothers who depend on bottle feeding. Test of significance shows the association between bottle feeding and mother's education is highly significant  $P < 0.001$ .

**Table No.2 Association between bottle feeding practices and mother's education**

| Bottle feeding practices | Mother's education |           |            |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
|                          | Illiterate         | Literate  | Total      |
| Yes                      | 113(65.0)          | 3(8.8)    | 116(55.8)  |
| No                       | 61(35.5)           | 31(91.2)  | 92(44.2)   |
| Total                    | 174(100.0)         | 34(100.0) | 208(100.0) |

$\chi^2 = 36.9$  ;  $df=2$  ;  $P < 0.001$ ; Association is highly Significant

**Graph No.2 Association between bottle feeding practices and mother's education**

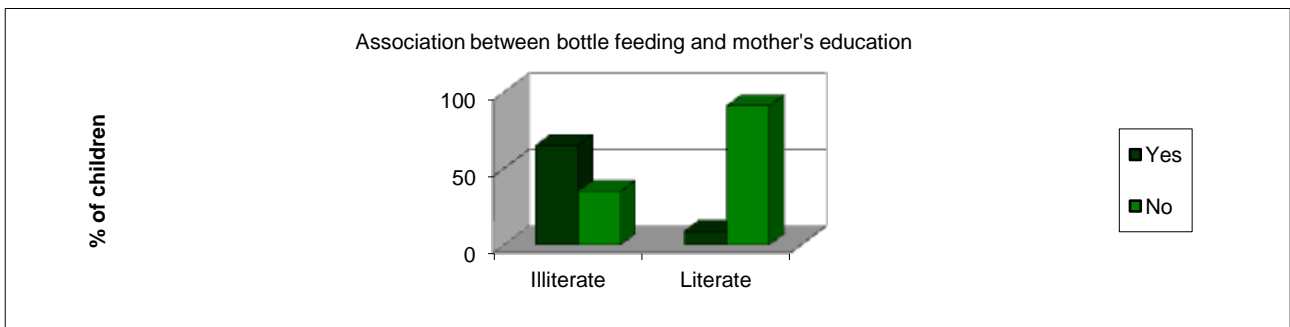


Table No.3 and Graph No.3 shows the association between mother's education and time of onset of breast feeding. 31 out of 34 children (91.2%) belong to literate mothers, who received the breast feeding from their mothers on the first day after delivery, while 96 out of 174 children i.e. (55.2%) belong to illiterate mothers, who received breast feeding from their mothers on and after third day of delivery. The association between mother's education and time of starting of breast feeding is highly significant  $P < 0.001$ , it means, mother's education has influence on the onset of breast feeding practices.

**Table No. 3 Association between time of onset of breast feeding and mother's education**

| Time of onset of breast feeding | Mother's education |           |            |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
|                                 | Illiterate         | Literate  | Total      |
| First day                       | 62(35.6)           | 31(91.2)  | 93(44.7)   |
| Second day                      | 16(9.2)            | 0(0.0)    | 16(7.7)    |
| Third day+                      | 96(55.2)           | 3(8.8)    | 99(47.6)   |
| Total                           | 174(100.0)         | 34(100.0) | 208(100.0) |

$\chi^2 = 36.3$  ;  $df=4$  ;  $P < 0.001$ ; Association is highly Significant

**Graph No. 3 Association between time of onset of breast feeding and mother's education**

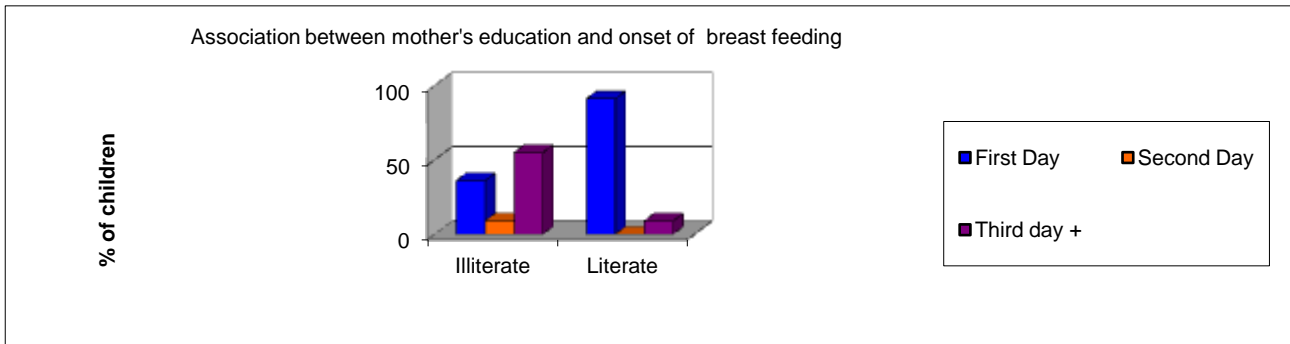


Table No.4 and Graph No.4 shows the association between the way of termination of breast feeding and mother's education. 88 out of 174 children, (50.6%) belong to illiterate mothers and continue the breast feeding, and remaining (27.0%) 47 out of 174 children's breast feeding is terminated suddenly by their mothers. (22.4%) i.e. 39 out of 174; children's breast feeding is terminated gradually.

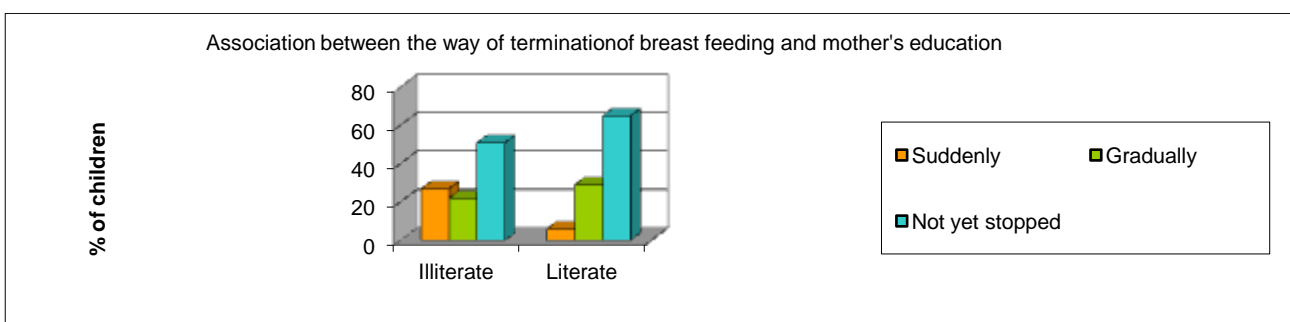
22 out of 34 children (64.7%) belong to literate mothers, whose breast feeding is regular and not terminated, and remaining (5.9%) 2 out of 34, children's breast feeding stopped suddenly by their mothers. (29.4%), i.e. 10 out of 34 children's breast feeding is terminated gradually, which means that, the sudden termination of breastfeeding is higher among illiterate mothers (27%) than literate mothers (5.9%) and significantly associated ( $P < 0.01$ ).

**Table No.4 Association between the way of termination of breast feeding and mother's education.**

| Way of termination of breast of feeding | Mother's education |           |            |
|---|--------------------|-----------|------------|
|   | Illiterate         | Literate  | Total      |
| Suddenly                                | 47(27.0)           | 2(5.9)    | 49(23.5)   |
| Gradually                               | 39(22.4)           | 10(29.4)  | 49(23.5)   |
| Do not stop                             | 88(50.6)           | 22(64.7)  | 110(53.0)  |
| Total                                   | 174(100.0)         | 34(100.0) | 208(100.0) |

$\chi^2 = 14.0$  ;  $df=4$  ;  $P < 0.01$ ; Association is Significant

**Graph No.4 Association between the way of termination of breast feeding and mother's education.**



## DISCUSSION

The findings of present study confirmed with certain other studies that children of uneducated mothers and those living in the poorest households are most likely to be malnourished (John et al., 2005). Higher the level of mother's education, lower the level of underweight child is observed (Salah et al., 2006). The bottle feeding practices are more prevalent among illiterate mothers. The study undertaken at Northern Iraq confirms that children born to illiterate mothers remains the high risk group in terms of inadequate breast feeding. Exclusive breast feeding is received more to the children of literate mothers than illiterate mothers. Onset of breast feeding on the first day and long continuation of breast feeding is also higher among the literate mothers. Feeding is associated with education of mothers and it implies that feeding practices belonging to literate mothers are better than feeding practices of illiterate mothers. The sudden termination of breast feeding is higher among illiterate mothers than literate.

## CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusion can be drawn from of this study. Lack of awareness and misconception about adequate feeding practices are considered as the main underlying causes of inadequate breastfeeding and complementary feeding. Thus, the association between feeding practices and mother's education in this study is significant.

Thus, in order to improve feeding practices, encourage the feeding practices according to the WHO, and it recommends that children must receive nothing but breast milk (exclusive breastfeeding) for the first six months of life, because breast milk during the first six months of life provides a complete source of nutrition. Raise awareness about adequate feeding practices for mothers and small children, particularly during the first year of age because first six years of life (and especially the first two years) have a great and lasting influence on the quality of life of a human being.

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