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Impact of infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices on nutritional status of children

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Simple, valid and reliable indicators are vital to track progress during the first two years of life. Present study was conducted in less developed districts of Pakistan to cover Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) indicators of 2478 children between 0-23 months and nutritional status of 7155 children 6-59 months of age. IYCF and anthropometric data was collected for 565 children. It was found that only 22% children were given breast milk in the first hour after delivery. More than 90% mothers gave colostrum to their children; however, only 45% mothers practiced exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. Only 38% children were introduced to complimentary foods at the recommended age i.e. 6-8 months. 84% mothers continued breastfeeding up to one year while around 65% mothers continued up to two complete years. Alarming, less than 10% children were given minimum acceptable diet (MAD) in terms of meal frequency and dietary diversity. Expectedly, prevalence of malnutrition was high among the children. Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) was nearly 14% while Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) was 3%. Up to 37% children suffered from chronic malnutrition (stunting) and almost 30% children were underweight. Alarming 54% children were anemic. Prevalence of childhood illnesses was also high. During the two weeks before data collection 59% children had cough, 34% had breathing difficulty, 39% suffered from diarrhea and 67% had fever. Overall, the children in surveyed areas were malnourished and consequently suffered from frequent childhood illnesses potentially attributed to poor Infant and Young Child Feeding practices.

Biography

Mariam Anees completed her PhD from Medical University of Vienna, Austria and is currently serving as Assistant Professor at the Department of Biochemistry, Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan. She has received various awards and distinctions including Austrian Life Science Award, HEC Overseas Doctoral Scholarship and Role of Honor in Graduation and Merit Scholarship in M-Phil studies. She has 20 reputed publications with a cumulative Impact Factor of above 50. She is also a Member of American Association of Cancer Research and International Neuro-endocrine Federation.

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