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Patterns, problems, and influences in feeding of formula-fed infants in Makati City, Philippines

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A prospective descriptive study involving 156 participants practicing formula-feeding was done at Cembo Health Center, Makati City, Philippines. Information on maternal, infant demographic data, feeding history and current feeding history were obtained through an investigator-conducted interview. Of the 156 respondents, 44% were from the 20-30 years old age group, in which there was significantly higher percentage of mothers practicing exclusively formula feeding than mixed feeding. There were 141 mothers with previous breastfeeding experience and only 30% of them continued breastfeeding and mixed-fed their infants. Fifty-seven mothers had infants given breast milk substitutes or supplements at birth. The most frequently reported reasons for stopping breastfeeding were insufficient milk production (58.3%) and the need to return to work or school (25.0%). Top two maternal influences for milk formula choice were recommendations from their doctor (36.5%) and from a relative or friend (30.8%). Only 21.1% of the respondents had infants who encountered problems, wherein the most common was constipation (45.5%). Ninety-three mothers reported changing their infant's milk formula and 77% of them did not consult a doctor prior to change. Formula changes usually occur two or three times, commonly before 12 months of age. In summary, the most common maternal reason for breastfeeding cessation is insufficient milk production. Constipation is the most prominent feeding problem among formula-fed infants, and is also the most frequent reason for formula switch. Milk formula changes commonly occurred before the first year of life and often without physician guidance.

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