

# Awareness and Knowledge Regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) Practice among House Officers Versus General Practitioner

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** To compare the awareness and knowledge regarding IYCF practice among House Officers versus general practitioner

**Study Design:** Cross sectional comparative study

**Place and duration of study:** Pediatric Department LUMHS from January 2018 to June 2018

**Methodology:** A total of 200 doctors were selected with non-probability purposive sampling technique and divided equally in Group A (House Officers and Group B (General Practitioner) for our convenience. A total of 100 fresh medical graduates (House Officers) and 100 general practitioner of at least 3 years' experience were included in the study. A structured questionnaire was use to collect the information regarding awareness of IYCF. Two groups were compared by using Chi square test and p value <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

**Results:** A total of 200 participants were divided in two groups, Group A consist of 100 house officers and Group B 100 general practitioner. Thirty questions were asked from each participants and response rate was 100%. For one question both groups answered 100%, for 27 questions house officers gave correct answers as compared to general practitioner, while for 2 questions general practitioner answers correctly then the house officers.

**Conclusion:** Fresh Doctors (House officers had better knowledge regarding the IYCF practice as compared to General Practitioner. General Practitioner should be trained for IYCF and it should be a part of curriculum of final years MBBS students.

**Keywords:** IYCF, General Practitioners, Mother feeding, Young doctors

## INTRODUCTION

In 2020 WHO and UNICEF developed universal strategy for young children. It draw the world's attention towards feeding practice and its impact on growth, development and nutritional status <sup>1</sup>. About 2.7 million childhood death occurs annually due to undernutrition <sup>2</sup>. Infant and young child feeding practice improve child survival along with growth and development. Good nutrition during the first 2 years of life decreases the mortality and morbidity, it also reduces the chronic diseases. In a study from Afghanistan about 58% of the infants were exclusively breastfed. Complementary foods were given in 41% infants. Only 28% of children received foods from four food groups. High rate of undernutrition was due to Suboptimal IYCF practices<sup>6</sup>.

Health Care Professional can play a vital role in promoting breast feeding and appropriate complementary feeding practice according to recommended IYCF guidelines by WHO. Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences Jamshoro has included IYCF in curriculum of final year MBBS and students are being taught about recommended guidelines regarding infant and young child feeding including counselling skills to motivate mothers to follow IYCF practices.

Many studies in past identified the knowledge about breast feeding among mothers but no study was found in literature discussing the awareness and knowledge of IYCF among house officers (Young doctors) versus general practitioner.

Hypothesis of this study is that inclusion of IYCF in curriculum of final year MBBS will result in better knowledge and appropriate counselling skills, which will be helpful to motivate mothers to practice recommended IYCF guidelines for feeding their children.

Our objective is to compare the awareness and knowledge regarding IYCF practice among House Officers versus general practitioner

## METHODOLOGY

This cross sectional comparative study was done at Pediatric Department from January 2018 to June 2018. A total of 200 doctors were selected with non-probability purposive sampling technique and divided equally in Group A (House Officers and Group B (General Practitioner) for our convenience. A total of 100 fresh medical graduates (House Officers) and 100 general practitioner of at least 3 years' experience were included in the study. The study was conducted after the approval of head and chairmen of Pediatric Department. The purpose of the study was explained to participants and their consent was taken.

A structured questionnaire was use to collect the information regarding awareness of IYCF. Data was analyzed by using SPSS version 22. Two groups were compared by using Chi square test and p value <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

## RESULTS

A total of 200 participants were divided in two groups, Group A consist of 100 house officers and Group B 100 general practitioner. Thirty questions were asked from each participants and response rate was 100%. For one question both groups answered 100%, for 27 questions house officers gave correct answers as compared to general practitioner, while for 2 questions general practitioner answers correctly then the house officers.

Table 1-A, Correlation Between Group A and B

Q. No	Question	Group-A %	Group-B %	Chi-square	P-value
Q1	Best food for new born baby is:	100%	100%	45.388	< .05
Q2	Breast milk should be started	94%	84%	7.5618	0.022802
Q3	Exclusive breast feeding means	68%	22%	42.7932	< 0.00001
Q4	Colostrum	98%	76%	13.3604	0.000257
Q5	How many times infant should breast feed?	94%	24%	108.7163	< 0.00001
Q6	Breast feeding should be continued	92%	68%	16.3183	0.000054
Q7	To produce enough milk mother should	18%	90%	105.2632	< 0.00001
Q8	Choice of milk in premature baby who are not able to suckle breast is	100%	62%	46.9136	< 0.00001
Q9	Which milk you advise immediately after caesarian section	92%	42%	36.4357	< 0.00001
Q10	Correct timing for initiation of breast feeding after caesarian section	68%	52%	6.945	0.031039

Q11	Supplementation of infant formula is needed for twin babies during 1st 6 months of life.	66%	52%	4.0513	0.044138
Q12	Mother milk is sufficient for her twin babies	68%	66%	0.9942	.318722 (N.S)
Q13	During next pregnancy mother can continue breast feeding	78%	70%	2.4125	.12037 (N.S)
Q14	Breast feeding should be discontinued if baby develop diarrhea or respiratory infections.	90%	58%	26.6112	< .00001
Q15	Breast feeding should be continued with maternal	60%	80%	6.1081	.106468 (N.S)

Table 1-B Correlation Between Group A and B

Q. No	Question	Group-A %	Group-B %	Chi-square	P-value
Q16	Best time for counseling regarding breast feeding is	82%	54%	19.9082	0.000048
Q17	key points of good position of baby to breast are	22%	12%	22.9073	< .00001
Q18	Key signs of good attachment of baby to breast are	50%	28%	65.4195	< 0.00001
Q19	mother can breast feed baby in lying position	58%	24%	8.489	0.003573
Q20	Appropriate diet during pregnancy is	64%	6%	84.617	< 0.00001
Q21	Appropriate diet during lactation is	62%	56%	25.3784	< 0.00001
Q22	What is meant by complementary food?	92%	30%	78.4158	< 0.00001
Q23	Correct age to start Complementary foods	98%	46%	67.6667	< 0.00001
Q24	Frequency, amount and consistency of complementary food depend upon	76%	32%	39.1357	< 0.00001
Q25	Ideal complementary food includes.	86%	52%	25.4532	0.000012
Q26	A 12 month old child needs	82%	56%	19.0602	0.000073
Q27	infant or young child who is not breast fed needs	84%	4%	133.848	< .00001
Q28	During illness of infant or young child	78%	50%	35.5037	< 0.00001
Q29	Best feeding technique for infant & young child	74%	50%	13.6452	0.001089
Q30	Feeding counseling for infant /young child should be done to	94%	60%	32.6369	< .00001

## DISCUSSION

This study aimed to assess the awareness of IYCF among doctors by comparing the knowledge of IYCF between House Officers and general practitioners. This study was done to determine the need to improve teaching and training of IYCF at University level. Finding of this study showed that 76% of house officers had basic knowledge of IYCF, which was assessed if students were able to answer 50% or more questions.

Overall 63% of the participants knew the basic knowledge of IYCF. About 76% participants were house officers who responded correctly as compared to 50% general practitioners who responded correctly. This finding could be attributed to the lack of facilities in general practitioners as compared to house officers. House Officers are more in touch with skillful teachers who are able to help their students practicing IYCF during the pediatric ward rotations.

The study also found that partial knowledge of the basics of IYCF was more in general practitioners. Out of all the respondents 76% of House Officers listed their source of knowledge is because of their curriculum and books. This is most likely due to the fact that IYCF is only taught in University. It has not yet been publicized as a method of practice in Pakistan. More than 50% house officers had basic knowledge of IYCF.

In this study general practitioner had less correct knowledge of IYCF, this could be because of lack of implementation of the IYCF practice in their settings, which could be explained due to lack of facilities and technical and skilled support. As abundant resources and facilities of IYCF is implemented in the universities that's why fresh graduates have more knowledge.

No previous studies regarding the knowledge of IYCF in house officers and general practitioners has been conducted. One study was done to assess the knowledge of breast feeding among doctors and nurses that revealed that majority of nursing students had average level of knowledge while among doctors had much more than the average level of knowledge<sup>3</sup>.

In 2014 a standard questionnaire on IYCF practices was used in the districts of Sindh. The purpose of this cross sectional survey was to prevent stunting in children. Information was gathered from mothers having children between 0 to 23 months old. About 49% newborn took breast feeding within 1<sup>st</sup> hour of life and 37% children were exclusively breast feed till 6 months of age. Seventy-percent mothers started complementary feeding at 8 months of age. Eighty-two percent of mothers continued breastfeeding for one year and 75% for two years of age<sup>4</sup>.

After the implementation of IYCF practice 20% mothers started breastfeeding within 1<sup>st</sup> hours after birth, 63% mothers continued exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) till 6 months of age and 24% decreases in diarrheal diseases<sup>5</sup>.

Pakistan has poor health reforms and in combination with low socioeconomic conditions results in high neonatal and childhood morbidity and mortality. Increased knowledge among medical students as well as general practitioner will lead to better implementation of the IYCF protocol, resulting in reduced morbidity and mortality in future. Implementation of IYCF can improve knowledge and practice of health care personnel. To achieve desirable goals in Child health all of its components must be implemented simultaneously with adequate coverage.

## CONCLUSION

Fresh Doctors (House officers had better knowledge regarding the IYCF practice as compared to General Practitioner. General Practitioner should be trained for IYCF and it should be a part of curriculum of final years MBBS students.

**Permission:** It was taken from the ethical review committee of the institute

**Conflict of interest:** None

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