A STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING CHILD FEEDING PRACTICES IN MISSAN PROVINCE[+]

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Abstract

This is a cross sectional study of (6308) children under five, who were admitted to AL-Zahrawi Hospital , Pediatric Department for the period between the 1 st of NOV .1996 to the 31 st of Dec. 2000 for having different complains. To determine the effects of the maternal age, residence and education of the parents on –feeding practices.

The study shows that the higher the age of the mothers and the illiteracy of parents the longer the average duration of breast –feeding in children. It reveals also that breast –feeding is more frequent in rural areas than in urban areas and the most common reason for stopping breast –feeding is not having enough milk.

المستخلص

دراسة مقطعية للأطفال دون سن الخامسة من العمر، الذين ادخلوا إلى مستشفى الزهراوي في محافظة ميسان للفترة من ١تشرين الثاني١٩٩٦ لغاية ٣١كانون الاول٢٠٠٠والذين يعانون من شكاوى مختلفة ودراسة تأثير عمر الأم والسكن وثقافة الأبوين على عملية الرضاعة الطبيعية.

الدراسة أثبتت أن زيادة عمر الأم وجهل الأبوين عاملان مؤثران في طول مدة الرضاعة الطبيعية، والرضاعة الطبيعية اكثر انتشاراً في المناطق الريفية منها في المناطق المدينية، وأهم الاسباب لإيقاف الرضاعة الطبيعية هو عدم كفاية الحليب عند الأم .

Introduction

Over 50 % of childhood death in the world are directly or indirectly related to nutrition [1,2]. For that reason, one of the major goals of the UNICEF is the halving of server and moderate malnutrition among the world under fives by the year 2000 [3].

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Malnutrition is not necessarily due to shortage of food, tradition , culture . Feeding patterns conception about food, education of the parents, rural-urban nature of living availability of food , diarrhea and infection are some of the determinants.

Due to socio-cultural difference, the child-feeding pattern varies between countries and also the nutritional status.

It has been observed by UNICEF that reversing the decline of breast feeding in the developing world could save the life of an estimated 1.5million infants every year. Bottle-fed babies who are often given powdered milk over diluted with unsafe water, in unsterile bottles, are several times more likely to die in infancy [3]. Breast milk is a complete nourishment, safe, hygienic, inexpensive, and helps fight common infections [4].

Therefore, understanding the child feeding pattern and variables influencing it, in any country is essential for appropriate child care and nutrition, maternal training and planning of any strategy for child welfare [5].

Aim of the Study

It aims to determine the effects of the maternal age, residence and education of the parents on breast-feeding practices.

Methods

This study included all children under five years who were admitted with their mothers to Al-Zahrawi Hospital Department for Children for having different complains in the last five years (1^{st} Nov. 1996 +- 31^{st} Dec. 2000). The data were collected using a specially designed questionnaire and the history taken from the mothers included maternal age, residence, education of the parents, investigating breast-feeding and weaning knowledge, practices of the mother, and the reasons for adopting breast-feeding. Regarding classification of parent's education, because formal categorization of parent's education is not available we categorize than as :

- Illiterate.
- Primary.
- Intermediate and over.

The X^2 test was applied to test for significant differences in breast feeding incidence between different populations.

Results

Our study shows that the higher the current age of the mother, the longer the average duration of breast-feeding. The duration is significantly lower ($P<0.01$) in age group<20 than in 30 and over are group… Table (1) and Figure (1). The study also shows that rural living and illiteracy of the parents are associated with longer average

duration of breast feeding than those living in urban areas with higher level of education (P<0.05)… Table (1).

The majority of the children up to the age of six months were still breast fed (%78) and minority were never fed or stopped feeding (%7 & %15 respectively).. table (2) and figure (2).the table also shows that the presence of still breast-feed children decreases with age while that of stopped breast feeding increases with age. It was found that the percentage of never breast fed children was equal irrespective of the child age…Table (2).

According to the cause of weaning, the most frequent cause for stopping breast feeding was insufficient milk (%43) with P<0.001, followed by use of contraceptive (%16), sickness of the mother (%10), and other non specific causes (%17)… Table (3). Among those who stopped breast feeding after 7-12months, insufficient milk and contraceptive were the most frequent causes, while those who stopped breast feeding in the age of 13-18months the pregnancy was the most important factor (P<0.001), and suitable age was the most important factor of those who stopped breast feeding after the age of 18months…Table (3).

The most frequent cause for never breast fed the last child was sick mother (%29), baby refusal (%28), insufficient milk (%21), and sick child (%15)… Table (4), Figure (3).

In rural areas sick mother and no milk were often a cause for never breast fed the baby, while in urban areas, babies refusal was more common than in rural areas.

Table.1: Percent distribution last birth in the last five years who were breast-fed according to mother's age, residence, & education.

	Number	Breast fed %	Bottle fed %	Mean duration of breast feeding in months
Current Age				
<20	287	88.2	11.8	7
21-30	2585	92.8	7.2	9
31-40	2176	94.4	5.6	13.5
41 & over	1260	90.4	9.6	16
Residence				
Urban	4007	92.4	7.6	11
Rural	2301	94.5	5.5	13
Mother's education				
Illiterate	3878	93.8	6.2	14
Primary	1411	93.5	6.5	11
Intermediate &over	1019	90.7	9.3	8
Father's education				
Illiterate	1811	93	7	14
Primary	2189	94	6	12
Intermediate &over	2308	92.5	7.5	10
Total	6308	93.2	6.8	12

Table 2: Percent distribution of current breast feeding status by age of the last birth in the last 5 years.

Age of last live birth months	Never breast fed %	Still breast fed %	Stopped %	Total Number
1	5	93	1.6	205
2	7.5	89	3.2	173
3	7.9	84	7.6	161
4	8.2	83	9.3	143
5	3.5	80	16	153
6	7	78	15	162
7	3.5	84	12	154
8	9	63	28	163
9	8.2	62	30	152
10	8.2	56	35	138
11	5.7	56	35	183
12+	5.7	45	50	1455
24+	8.1	5.3	87	1533
Total	6.8	44	49	4773

Table 3: Percent distribution of women according to reasons stated for weaning by duration of breast-feeding.

Reasons for weaning	Duration of breast feeding (months)							Total
	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-18	19-24	24+	Number
Suitable age	0.5	--	1.0	7.3	21	85	93	635
No enough milk	43	32	35	26	13	2.3	--	562
Pregnancy	2.6	9.1	25	34	40	7.5	4.4	348
Want to be pregnant	0.4	1	4.3	4.3	2.8	1.5	--	42
Used of contraceptive	16	24	11	10	4.8	0.6	--	247
Nipple problem	5.0	2.1	2.2	1	0.3	0.2	--	47
Sick mother	10	8.8	6.0	6.2	7	1.8	--	154
Breast feeding problem	5.2	5.1	2.6	3.9	1.7	0.1	--	70
Other	17	18	13	7.1	8.8	1.2	2.2	248
Total	586	385	214	228	296	591	54	2354

$P<0.001$

Table 4: Percent distribution of women who never breast fed last child.

Reason	%
Sick mother	29
Baby refuse	23
No milk	21
Sick child	15
Nipple problem	5
Other	4
Child died	3

Total	326

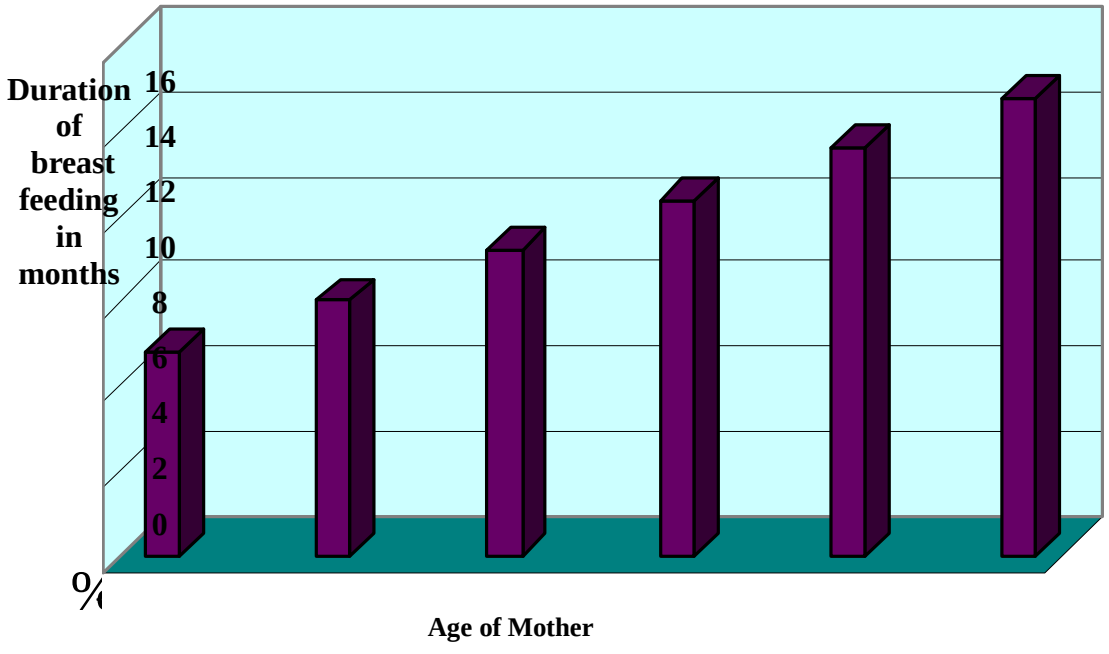
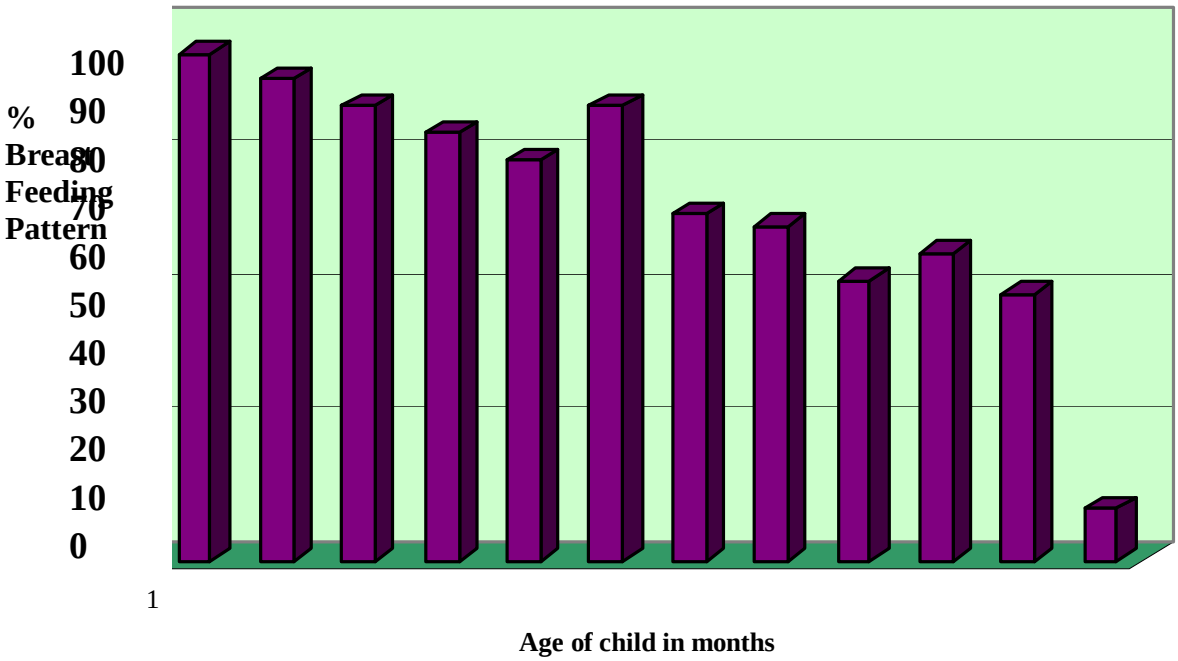


Fig. (1)



Breast – feeding pattern of under 5 years according to child's age
Fig. (2)

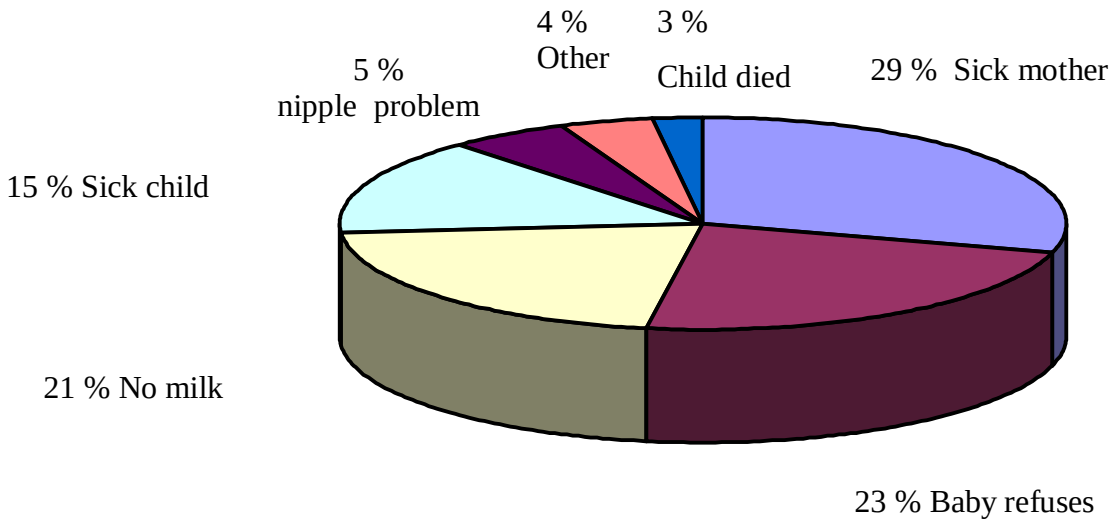


Fig. (3) :Reasons given for never breast – feeding

The results of our study confirm the high incidence of breast-feeding in our society (%93.2), a finding similar to that found in Africa (%98), Asia (%96), and South Africa (%90) [6]. The study also suggests a rapid decline in the use of bottle over the recent years ,this might be because of the effect of the sanction and the education programs on the TV and in the hospital Table (1), this finding is contrast to that found in USA where the proportion of breast feeding women has decreased since the early 1980 probably because of social differences [7].

The most common reason for terminating breast feeding it insufficient milk… Table (3) because the majority of women thought that their milk is not enough to feed their infants, and this lack of confidence inhibits oxytocin release [8, 9], so more educational programs must be done especially on TV, for data do indeed indicates that women who are better informed regarding the benefits of breast feeding processes are more likely to initiate breast feeding [10,11].

About %29 of those mothers who never breast fed their infants because of sickness mother and other reasons such as refusal of infant to take breast and the excessive crying of the baby, are understandable from the mother point of view and are certainly causes of anxiety, nevertheless these are known as difficulties of location and their management is simple and obvious [12,13,14], in contrast to other reasons encountered in more developed countries such as employment [15], or lack of motivation [16, 17, 18].

Furthermore management is facilitated by the fact that every mother questioned had wished to breast feed before and at the time of delivery. Artificial milk can be purchased on a prescription from either a general practitioner or hospital, or obtained cost free from welfare clinic or brought directly from a shop or pharmacy, majority of women received no advice on feeding their infants.

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