

## **Knowledge and practices of mothers regarding complementary feeding of babies aged 6-24 months and its correlates in Bope-Poddala MOH area**

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### **Introduction and Aim**

The present study was conducted in Bope-Poddala MOH area of Galle district, Sri Lanka to assess the knowledge and practices regarding complementary feeding of babies' age 6-24 months.

### **Methods**

A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted and sample consisted of 200 mothers having babies of above age category. An interviewer administered, pre tested questionnaire was used during maternal and child health (MCH) clinic sessions to collect information regarding complementary feeding. Data analysis was performed using SPSS software.

### **Results**

Of 200 mothers 72.5% had started complementary feeding at the age of 6 months and after. 127(63.5%) mothers initiated semi solid foods as complementary feed. Half of the study population lacked knowledge regarding vitamin A and calcium rich foods and disorders caused by deficiencies of these micronutrients. 20.5% of mothers added sugar and salt to complementary food before completion of 12 months. Ninety two children (46%) of study sample had received commercially prepared food for their complementary feeding. 40% of infants deviated from birth weight centile towards a level below at risk for underweight category.

### **Conclusions**

Although in general the overall knowledge regarding complementary feeding was satisfactory, maternal knowledge regarding critical micronutrients, deficiency disorders and feeding during illnesses was not satisfactory. Since considerable percentage of babies had deviated from birth weight centile towards underweight category, possession of satisfactory knowledge does not ensure satisfactory growth. Therefore there is a divergence between knowledge acquired and practical use of it. The gap between knowledge and practice should be filled to address this problem.