

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Mothers/Caregivers on Infant and Young Child Feeding, In Shabelle Zone of Somali Region, Eastern Ethiopia: A Cross Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Objectives/Research Problem: Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of mothers/caregivers on infant and young child feeding are key factors for optimal nutritional status, health and growth of children. The government of Ethiopia has developed infant and young child feeding guidelines since 2005 and incorporated with other health services. Despite this, studies and Demographic and Health Survey reports showed that the coverage of optimal feeding practices are not to the extent expected. But, this has not been documented in pastoral context. Hence, this study aims to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of the mothers/caregivers on optimal infant and young child feeding practices.

Materials and Method: A cross sectional study was carried out among 415 children below five years old and their mothers/caregivers from Somali Region, Eastern Ethiopia. The study participants were selected using a systematic sampling technique. Data were collected using structured interviewer administered questionnaire. Principal component analysis was carried out to generate Wealth, knowledge, attitude and practice indices. Multivariable logistic regression analyses were performed.

Results and Discussion: Among 415 study participants, 87.5%, 85% and 69.4% were illiterate, housewife and from rural residence, respectively. On multivariable logistic regression, after adjusting for other predictors, higher wealth index ($P=0.03$), and residing in Gode District ($P<0.001$) were significantly associated with having good Knowledge about optimal infant and young child feeding (IYCF). Similarly, good knowledge about optimal IYCF were positively associated with favorable attitude ($P<0.001$) conversely, good Knowledge was negatively associated with good practice ($P<0.001$).

Conclusion: Despite, the high knowledge of the participants on IYCF; a large proportion of mothers/caregivers had negative attitude and poor practice on proper IYCF leading to high rate of suboptimal feeding practices. Behaviour change communication interventions using strategies appropriate for the pastoralist and agro pastoralist community, that is targeting on culture, beliefs and practices related to IYCF need to be performed using religious leaders, teachers, students, youth associations, female associations, health professionals, frontline health actors, and developmental armies to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice.

KEYWORDS: Child Feeding, Knowledge, Attitude, Practice

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