

Subtheme 2: Women, children, and nutrition

OP20

Knowledge, attitude and practice of infant and young child feeding among public health midwives in Jaffna district

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Background and Objectives: Feeding plays a major role in the growth and development of infants and young children. Knowledge, attitude, and practice of infant and young child feeding (IYCF) among public health midwives are important as they are the designated healthcare workers for maternal and child health in the field. This study describes the knowledge, attitude, and practice of IYCF among public health midwives in the Jaffna district.

Methods: This cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out from September 2021 to December 2021 among public health midwives in the Jaffna district. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Data collection was done in polyclinics and the respective Medical officer of Health (MOH) monthly conferences. Knowledge and attitude were determined to be good, adequate, and inadequate based on a cumulative score.

Results: The response rate to the questionnaire was 91.1% (n=123). In the sample, 97% of PHM had adequate or good knowledge about breastfeeding; 91.9% had adequate or good knowledge about complementary feeding; and 97.8% had adequate or good attitudes toward breastfeeding. However, only 63% of PHM had adequate and good attitudes towards complementary feeding. A higher proportion of midwives who had 6-10 years of experience (36.4%) and those who had 11-15 years of experience (34.5%) had inadequate attitudes towards complementary feeding. All the midwives reported they practice the Ministry of Health's IYCF guidelines.

Conclusions: As attitudes towards complementary feeding seem lacking among 27% of PHM, the Ministry of Health should take steps to address this problem. It was observed that age, experience, and educational level are associated with knowledge, attitude, and practice. Recently registered midwives have better attitudes than senior, more experienced midwives, which may be due to changes in the midwifery course and inadequate opportunities for in-service training.

Keywords: Infant and young child feeding, Exclusive breastfeeding, Complementary feeding, Public health midwife