

Abstract

Optimal infant feeding practices rank among the most effective interventions to improve health and development of infants. Gross motor development is one of the determinants of physical growth of infant, which can be improved by the sound infant feeding practices. Hence, the study was carried out with the objective of determining the association between infant feeding practices and development of motor milestones in term infants. A total of 200 infants were recruited at the age of 4th month from Maternal and Child Health (MCH) clinics and Child Welfare Clinics (CWC) in Pannala MOH division as the base line and out of total number of infants, 94 infants were followed up at the age of 6th month to determine the changes in infant feeding practices and acquisition of motor milestones. Descriptive & statistical analyses were performed to assess the feeding practices and the motor development. Ninety five percent of mothers have initiated breastfeeding within first half an hour and 82% of mothers in the MOH division, exclusively breastfed to their infants during first 4 months. In the follow up sample (n=94), exclusive breastfeeding rate was reduced up to 61.7%. At the base line (n=200), none of the infant achieved expected gross motor milestones, whereas at the follow- up (n=94), 68.1% of infants have achieved sitting without support. Around seventy four percent of mothers have timely introduced complementary feeding, while 59.1% and 90.3% of infants achieved minimum dietary diversity and minimum meal frequency respectively. In this study, significant positive association has been proved between minimum meal frequency and development of motor skills in infants aged 6th month old.

Key words: Infant, Feeding practices, Motor milestone, Breast feeding, Minimum meal frequency