

Abstract

Responsive feeding practices among caregivers in rural Anuradhapura; a missing component in infant feeding!

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Abstract**Background**

Responsive feeding (RF) is a strategy that has a positive impact on growth, caregiver behaviours and dietary intake of children. But concern given to RF in national nutrition programmes is inadequate. Our aim is to explore the knowledge and practices on RF among mothers having infants of 9 months in Nuwaragam Palatha Central (NPC) MOH area, Anuradhapura.

Methods

We conducted a qualitative study using in-depth interviews with mothers who were purposefully selected to represent different socio-demographic backgrounds. In-depth interviews were conducted according to Family Health International guidelines. Data analysis was done using framework approach. Ethical clearance was obtained for the study.

Results

Though mothers practice some components of the four step approach of RF, none of them seem to have effectively practiced the full concept in feeding their child. Only few mothers have prepared a separate feeding place. But, even those mothers were unable to stick to that place. And the preparation of the place was not satisfactory to meet the child's desires. Mothers were good at identifying hunger and satiety signs. However, majority of mothers were not feeding their children in response to hunger signs but according to a time table made on their own. Letting the child watch television and taking the child around the garden were major factors of distraction while feeding. Mothers stated the difficulty in introducing new food to their children indicating the lack of reciprocity between the child and the caregiver.

Conclusions

The concept of RF is not effectively practiced in the community of NPC, MOH area.

Key words: Responsive Feeding practices; Care givers; Rural Anuradhapura

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