

**Abstract**

# Knowledge and perceptions on responsive feeding among primary health care providers at field level in rural Anuradhapura

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**Abstract****Background**

Responsive feeding (RF) is recognized as an effective intervention in preventing under nutrition in young children. Our observations within the community have shown that the practice of this concept is not satisfactory. Our aim is to explore the knowledge and perceptions on RF among Public Health Midwives (PHM) in Nuwaragam Palatha Central (NPC) MOH area, Anuradhapura.

**Methods**

We conducted a qualitative study using focus group discussions with two groups of PHMs each including 9 participants in NPC, MOH area. They were conducted according to Family Health International guidelines. Data analysis was done using framework approach. Ethical clearance was obtained for this study.

**Results**

None of these groups seems to have a clear understanding about the full concept of RF. All of them accepted that the mothers should feed their children in a separate place that is comfortable, attractive and free of distractions. Some of the PHMs knew that children should be fed according to a time table made according to child's hunger signs. But mothers have made their own timetables for this purpose. They knew the importance of responding to the child promptly with age appropriate food and the importance of incorporating Early Childhood Care and Development concept while feeding though it is not practiced in their fields. Neither the PHMs were aware of reciprocity nor mother and child having reciprocity during feeding revealing that concept is not practiced in this setting.

**Conclusion**

PHMs have lack of understanding regarding the full concept, which could be a probable cause for the lack of practice of RF in the community.

**Key words:** Knowledge; Responsive feeding; Primary health care; Anuradhapura

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**Cite this abstract as:** Karunamuni N, Senevirathne S, Pallewaththa PWPWK, Rathnayake RMM, Wickramage K, Agampodi SB, Agampodi TC. Knowledge and perceptions on responsive feeding among primary health care providers at field level in rural Anuradhapura. *Anuradhapura Medical Journal* 2015;9 (2Supp):S08.

**DOI:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.4038/amj.v9i2Supp.7557>

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