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Research Article

**A STUDY REGARDING AWARENESS ABOUT WEANING
AMONG MOTHERS VISITING PEDIATRIC MEDICINE
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Objective: To determine the awareness among mothers visiting pediatrics OPD and ward in THQ Hospital Ahmed Pur East, Bahawalpur. To create awareness and health consciousness about hazards of not starting weaning at proper time.

Study Design: Observational Cross-sectional Descriptive Study.

Study Setting: Study was conducted at Pediatrics Ward THQ Hospital Ahmed Pur East, Bahawalpur.

Study Duration: From August, 2017 to April 2018.

Study Population: A total of 100 mothers of reproductive age (15-45 years) were selected. Questionnaire was designed based on questions relevant to the objective of the study. Data was collected with informed consent and was analyzed by SPSS version.

Results: 100 mothers of reproductive age (15-45 years) were questioned. Among them 74% knew about weaning, 18% to some extent and 8% did not know at all. 60% of mothers were literate and other 40% illiterate. 34% of them were the resident of rural area, 16% of them were the resident of semi-urban area and the rest 50% were the resident of urban area. 54% knew problems associated with not starting weaning, 24% to some extent 22% did not know it all. Among them 37% had income up to 10,000 PKR per month, 14% up to 20,000 PKR per month, 27% up to 25,000 PKR per month, 15% up to 50,000 PKR per month and 7% above 50,000 PKR per month. 78% fed mother's milk, 1% cow's milk and other 6% formula milk. 59% of them started weaning between the infant age of 4-6 months, 11% between 7-9 months of age, 12% between 10-12 months and rest 18% between 1-1.5 years of age. 67% continued weaning during illness, 28% stopped weaning during illness and other 5% did not know what to do. 86% continued weaning during routine vaccination, 5% discontinued weaning and rest 9% did not know what to do. Foods which were included in weaning consisted of khichri 61%, Bread 36%, Banana 23%, Halva 20%, Cereals 18%, Cereals 18%, Biscuits 10%, Dalia 9%, Yogurts 5%, Meshed potato 3%, Meshed meat 3%, Choori 1% and Noodles 1%.

Conclusion: Evaluation of awareness among mothers were evaluated and analyzed to be poor with respect to their poor economic and poor educational status.

Key Words: Weaning, Pediatrics ward, THQ Hospital Ahmed Pur East, Bahawalpur

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INTRODUCTION:

Weaning: (Anglo- Saxon WENIAN)

“The process of gradually introducing an infant to what will be its adult diet and withdrawing the supply of its mother’s milk.”

The term weaning is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word WENIAN, which means “to become accustomed to something different.”The Concise Oxford Dictionary says to wean is “to teach the sucking child to feed otherwise than from the breast.”Weaning is often seen as the end of something; however, it is more appropriately viewed as a beginning. We misuse the word wean in the context of stopping other activities or habits; weaning is not the cessation of breast feeding but rather the addition of new foods.

The infant is considered to be fully weaned once it no longer receives any breast milk (or bottled substitute).Breast milk alone is not able to provide sufficient amounts of all the nutrients needed to maintain growth after the first six months .Increasing need of calories and protein of growing children cannot be met by the diminishing output of mother’s milk. Milk is also a poor source of vitamin C and supplementation with fruit juice is essential. Iron stores in liver of the infant would last only up to 4-6 months. Hence iron-rich foods should be given at least from six months onwards. Milk is also deficient in vitamin D. If the baby is to maintain the expected rate of growth and remain healthy and well nourished, supplementary feeding has to be restored to round about the 6th month of life.

The health related problems related include Marasmus, Stunned growth, Rickets etc.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY:

The study was conducted over 100 mothers of reproductive age 15-45 years admitted in pediatrics ward and visiting OPD THQ Hospital Ahmed Pur East, Bahawalpur. The study was conducted from August, 2017 to april 2018. The study was conducted with the permission of Medical superintendent of hospital. The tools used for study included Socio demographic data sheet which includes age, sex, religion , marital status and occupation. After that structured questionnaires were prepared and information was collected by informed consent and proper confidentiality. The study design was Observational Cross-sectional Descriptive study. No intervention was required to carry out the study.

LIMITATIONS:

- The mothers had non-serious attitude.
- Most of them did not understand the questions.
- Research was conducted on a specific group of mothers visiting pediatrics ward and OPD.

RESULTS:

The study was conducted to understand the awareness of mothers regarding weaning of their child with association to their socio-economic and educational status.

45% mothers were found to be literate and 74% knew about weaning. Literacy rate among mothers proves the level of understanding in brought up of their child with no or minimum knowledge about weaning.

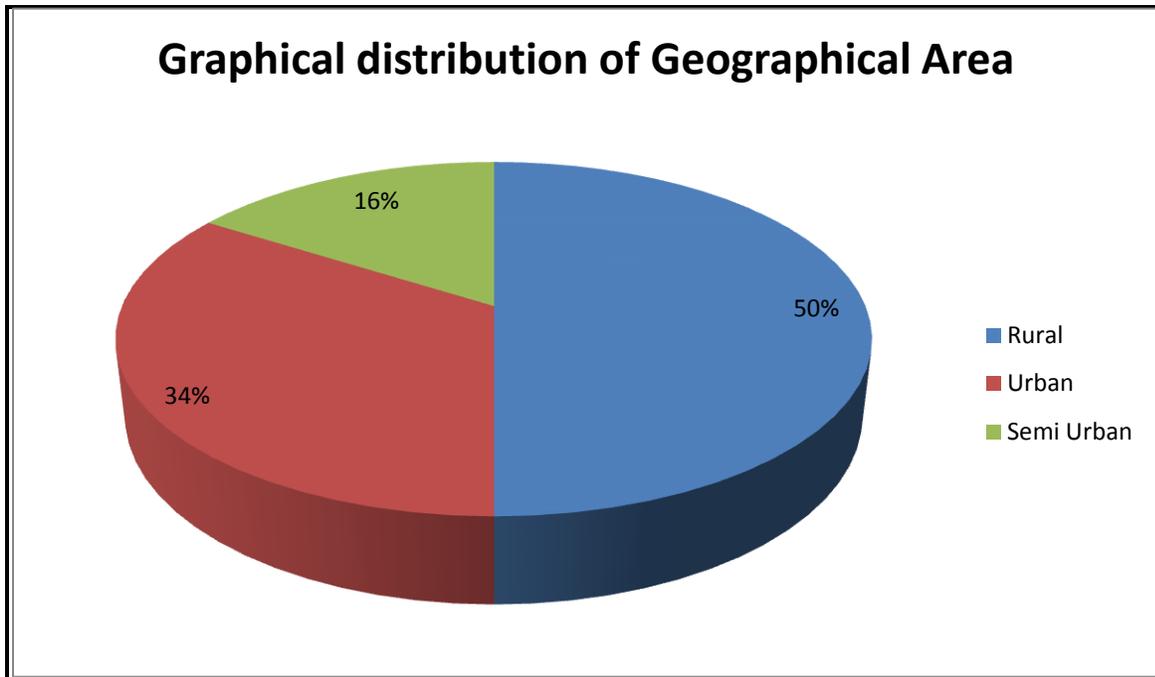
Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Literate	45	45 %
Illiterate	55	55%

Frequency distribution table of literacy of mothers

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	74	74%
No	8	8%
To some extent	18	18%

Frequency distribution table of mothers having idea about weaning

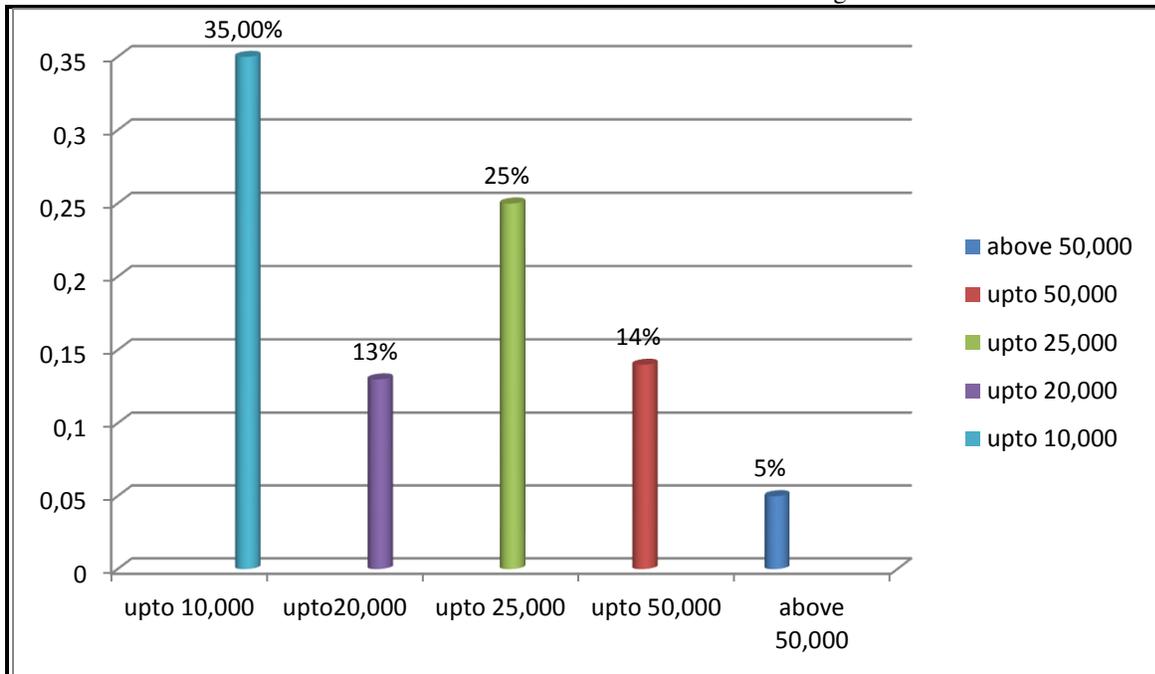
50% were the resident of rural area and 16% of them were the resident of semi urban and only 34% r were resident of urban area, which clearly showed their level of knowledge with regards to their rural locality.



Even with the knowledge about weaning only 59% started weaning at the age of 4-6 months which clearly correlates with the literacy rate of mothers.

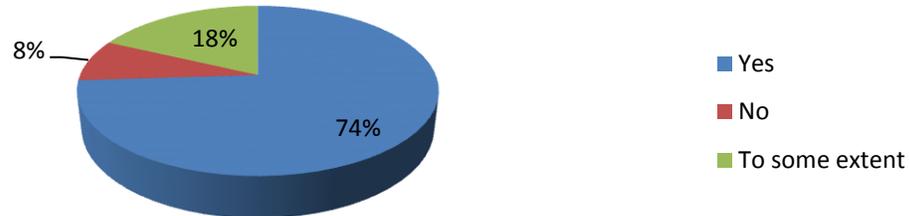
Mothers did not have much understanding about child’s nutritional status. Only 54% knew about the problems associated with not starting weaning which also strongly correlates with literacy status of mother.

It can also be linked with poverty only 14% had income up to 50,000 PKR per month which showed a severe draw back related to mother’s awareness with child’ health and weaning.



74% knew about weaning but only 59% appreciated the proper time of starting weaning which strongly correlated with literacy of 45%.

Graphical distribution of mothers having idea about weaning



While the foods to be given during weaning were o kichri 61%, Bread 36%,Banana 23%, Halva 20%, Cereals 18%, Cereals 18%.Biscuits 10%, Dalia 9%, Yogurts 5%,Meshed potato 3%,Meshed meat 3%,Choori 1% and Noodles 1% and these were quite satisfactory and up to the mark of nutritional status of the child but not started at a proper time which was again the same problem about lack of awareness responsible for multiple nutritional disorders and other health related issues in children and infants.

CONCLUSION:

From the analysis of data and results it is clear that practice of weaning are strongly associated with educational and economic status of the families. Poor economic status and educational background leads to poor weaning practices and poor health status of children.

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