



# PARENTS KNOWLEDGE ON COMPLEMENTARY FEEDING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH STUNTING: A SURVEY OF PARENTS HAVING CHILDREN IN NURSERIES IN KUANTAN, PAHANG

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## ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to assess the knowledge on the complementary feeding practices of parents having children in the nurseries in Kuantan, Pahang. A convenient sampling method was used to choose from the ten selected nurseries which were in Kuantan, Pahang. A research questionnaire was developed and pretested. The demographic information and data on feeding practices and stunting were gathered on the pretested questionnaire. The data was compiled, and statistical analysis was performed objectively. There were 137 children has been reported through the survey which involving 66 boys (48.2%) and 71 girls (51.8%). The analysis showed that most participants (98.5%) chose 6-12 months as the suitable child's age to introduce complementary feeding (CF) while only two respondents (1.5%) chose 4-5 months. Various responses in the questionnaire that were design for evaluating the parents' knowledge on CF showed that out of 137 children 78 (56.9%) were normal while 59 children (43.1%) stunted. Out of 78 normal children, 50:50% boys and girls. On the other hand, it was observed that the number of stunted girls which was 32 (54.2%) which was more than boys 27 (45.8%). In terms of the relationship of parents' knowledge with CF and stunting, there was no association being the r-value -0.071. In conclusion, the results indicated that there was no significant relationship between parents' knowledge with CF and stunting children, in which it showed a weak negative correlation. Considerable number of children involved in this study were stunted.

## INTRODUCTION

Malnutrition can be categorized as either undernutrition, which is the main reason for stunting and wasting, meanwhile overnutrition can be the risk factor for obesity and related diseases. This situation has increased the concerns in countries which are struggling with the double-burden of malnutrition including Malaysia which is one of the upper middle-income countries.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate parents' knowledge regarding complementary feeding practices.
2. To estimate the proportion of stunted children in selected nurseries in Kuantan.
3. To determine the relationship between parents' knowledge on complementary feeding and stunting children.

## METHODOLOGY

This study has been conducted in ten selected nurseries in Kuantan, Pahang that had been selected randomly. The participants who have been involved in this study were the parents who send their young children to the ten selected daily care nurseries. Participants from all ten nurseries were recruited through a convenience sampling. Objective (1) and (2) will be explained by descriptive analysis while objective (3) will be analyzed by Pearson Correlation analysis test.

## RESULTS

Table 1: Distribution of participants' responds towards questions of knowledge on complementary feeding

Questions	Correct responses	No. (%) giving correct response
Should meals prepared for children have balanced & complete nutrition?	Agree	137 (100%)
Do you agree that vegetables and fruits help in children's digestion?	Agree	137 (100%)
Should protein sources (e.g., meat, chicken, milk, etc.) be given more often?	Agree	110 (80.3%)
Is it necessary to change the texture and the methods of food preparation gradually according to the age of the child?	Agree	136 (99.3%)
Should children be allowed for snacking too often or in quantity in large amounts?	Disagree	128 (93.4%)

Table 2: Distribution of child's status according to their gender

Child's gender	Child's status		
	Normal	Stunted	Total
Boy	39 (50.0%)	27 (45.8%)	66 (48.2%)
Girl	39 (50.0%)	32 (54.2%)	71 (51.8%)
<b>Total</b>	78 (100%)	59 (100%)	137 (100%)

Table 3: The relationship between parents' knowledge on complementary feeding and stunting children (n = 137)

The relationship between parents' knowledge on complementary feeding and stunting children	
Indicators	Value
Pearson Correlation, <i>r</i>	-0.071
<i>p</i> -value, <i>p</i>	0.409

## DISCUSSION

1. Most of participants agreed (80.3%) when answering the question regarding the frequency of protein provided during CF.
2. Proteins from animal sources such as meat, poultry, fish and eggs should be given daily because it is a main source of iron and zinc (MOH, 2009).
3. 136 participants (99.3%) was agreed with the question "Is it necessary to change the texture and the methods of food preparation gradually according to the age of the child?".
4. Abeshu et al. (2016) stated that the development of infant's neuromuscular highly affected the ability of masticating and swallowing food.
5. A higher number of stunted girls (54.2%) compared to males (45.8%).
6. Previous studies mentioned that a higher prevalence of stunting among male children compared to females in their study.
7. This may be caused by the poor calcium and protein intake in boys during the first year of life in third world countries.

## CONCLUSION

1. Boys and girls have equally distributed in normal category while in stunted category, the girls were having higher frequency than the boys.
2. There was no significant association between parents' knowledge on complementary feeding and stunting children.

## REFERENCES

1. Abeshu, M. A., Lelisa, A., & Geleta, B. (2016). Complementary Feeding: Review of Recommendations, Feeding Practices, and Adequacy of Homemade Complementary Food Preparations in Developing Countries – Lessons from Ethiopia. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 3(October). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2016.00041>
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