

ABSTRACT.

A Study of the Pattern of Artificial Feeding in the later part of Infancy - A Preliminary Communication

Pattern of artificial feeding in 111 infants between 5 - 12 months was studied by the use of a simple questionnaire filled in by the clinician during a consultation. 76 infants were seen in a well baby^{clinic} at a state maternity home and 25 in a private consultation practice.

Of the 111 infants studied

39 (35%) were still on a starter formula

39 (35%) were on an unmodified formula

33 (30%) were on a special follow on formula

Only 2/111 were on the state subsidised starter formula (Vitamilk) and none were on the cheapest available unmodified formula (Lakspray)

78 of these infants (70%) were found to have faltering of growth by the perusal of their growth chart.

Growth faltering was commoner 34/39 (87%) in those on unmodified formula than those on either starter formula 24/39 (60%) or special follow on formula 20/33 (60%). The difference however is not statistically significant and no conclusion as to causality can be drawn as other significant variables like quantity and quality of milk preparation and other weaning food were not studied.

The age ~~at which the~~^{of} change from either, breast milk or starter formula to unmodified or follow on formula was under six months in 17 (24%) between 6-9 months in 36 (50%) and over nine months in 19 (26%).

The mean as well as the median and the mode, approximately, for the change ~~over~~ was 6.9 years viz. in the seventh month.

Reconstitution of the milk powder with water was done erroneously by 56 (51%) of the mothers. 28 (25%) of them made milk too concentrated and other 28 (25%) made it too dilute.

Errors in reconstitution were significantly commoner with the unmodified formula 38/39 (97%) but occurred to a significant extent with both starter formula (12/39 - 31%) and special follow on formula (7/33 - 21%).

The possible reasons for and implications of these findings will be discussed and some modifications to the present policies governing rational use of artificial infant foods would be suggested.

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