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Health Promotion Program for Child Care at Home within the First Two Years of Life in Kalyobia Governorate

Objective: To assess mothers' health promotion needs (knowledge and practice) of their children care within the first two years of life, to plan and implement of health promotion program based on needs of mothers toward care of their children and evaluate the degree of mothers (knowledge and practices) improvement toward care of their children. **Subjects and Methods:** The present study included 100 mothers and their 100 healthy children aged within the first two years of life. They were chosen among attendants of MCH centers in Kalyobia Governorate for vaccination or follow up for growth monitoring. Tools of study were an interviewing questionnaire to assess the children and their mothers' knowledge and an observational checklist for assessing the mothers' practices for breast feeding, bottle feeding, preparation of food, stump care, bathing, diaper care, dressing, immunization and safety measures. Based on relevant literature, a health promotion educational program was developed. **Results:** Before the application of health promotion program, mean total knowledge score of mothers about child care within the first two years of life was inadequate (47.25 ± 9.85). However, after the application of the health promotion program, the mean total knowledge score of mothers improved significantly (103.70 ± 6.54 , $p < 0.001$). Prior to the application of the health promotion program, mean total practice score of mothers for care of their children within the first two years of life were inadequate (37.47 ± 4.97). However, after the application of the health promotion program, the mean total practice scores improved significantly (63.62 ± 3.77 , $p < 0.001$). Mean total knowledge scores of mothers before and after the application of the program were significantly distributed according to their age, education, employment, income and crowding index, while mean total practice scores of mothers were significantly distributed according to their age, education, employment and income. **Conclusions:** After the application of health promotion program, mothers' knowledge about their children care improved significantly in all knowledge and practice items. **Recommendations:** Continuous health education program is needed especially for illiterate mothers to increase mothers awareness toward the child care both knowledge and practices through home visits. Mass media should play a significant role to disseminate the needed information about child health care. Nurses should receive adequate training courses in children care (physically, emotionally and socially). In order to improve their skills in health education for mothers toward their children care.

INTRODUCTION

Infancy is characterized by the need to establish harmony between the self and the world. To achieve this harmony, mother should satisfy her infant's needs such as food, warmth, comfort, environmental stimulation and opportunities for self exploration and expression and nurturing relationship so that the infant experiences a sense of trust in the world and in him-

self (Weiler and Colvert, 1997).

Health promotion is defined by Black and Jacobs (1993) as the acquisition of mental, physical, and spiritual assets to protect and buffer us from disease as well as move us along the continuum toward high-level wellness. Whetsell et al. (2000) added that pediatric health promotion is based on the belief that if children learn the value of wellness early, it will become

their way of life.

The mother has the major influence on the child's life, in fact one of the best ways of producing sustainable improvements in child health is by directing projects toward improvement in the mother's well-being. A healthy, well educated mother is the first line of defense between her child and adverse factors in the physical and social environment (Seear, 2000).

Allender (1998) reported that all children, wherever they were born, need adequate proper care, which includes love, nutrition, cleanliness, stimulation, sleep, health care, immunization, safe living environment and knowledgeable care givers.

The role of the community health nurse offers the opportunity to teach health promotion, prevention and health maintenance to children and caregivers (Stanhope and Lancaster, 1996).

Child health is one of the major concerns of public health throughout the world. In Egypt, developing an awareness of child care is one of the most cherished goals. Caring for today's children is a guarantee of the nation's future. Children are true wealth of our country (Soltani et al., 1999). Mansour (2001) added that children within the first two years of life represent an important highly vulnerable members of society because they face special risks as susceptibility to communicable disease, developmental and survival challenges which adversely affect their health and endanger their lives. Many of this childhood illnesses susceptibility and challenges can be prevented by early intervention and strengthens the mothers role toward their children care. So they are in need of special attention.

AIM OF STUDY

The present study aimed to assess mothers' health promotion needs (knowledge and practice) of their children care within the first two years of life, to plan and implement of health promotion program based on needs of mothers toward care of their children and evaluate the degree of mothers (knowledge and practice) improvement toward care of their children.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Setting: This study was conducted in two maternal and child health (MCH) centers in Kalyobia Governorate (i.e., Damalo and Moshtohor MCH centers).

Sampling: A systematic random sample of 100 mothers and their 100 healthy children aged within the first two years of life. They were chosen among attendants of MCH centers in Kalyobia Governorate for vaccination or follow up for growth monitoring.

Tools: Data were collected by the following tools

An interviewing questionnaire to assess the children and their mothers' knowledge. It covered socio-demographic characteristic of the mothers and their children and assessment of mothers' knowledge regarding health, growth and development of their children

Observational checklist for assessing the mothers' practices for breast feeding, bottle feeding, preparation of food, stump care, bathing, diaper care, dressing, immunization and safety measures.

Based on relevant literature, a health promotion educational program was developed. The total number of sessions was 12 lasting for 16 hours (7 hours for knowledge and 9 hours for practice). Each session took 1-2 hours. The mothers were individually interviewed through lectures, discussions, role play and demonstration using real objects. After the implementation of the program contents a post-test was done for mothers to measure the effect of the program.

RESULTS

Table (1) shows that more than half of participant mothers (53%) aged 20-29 years. As regard education, less than one-fourth (23%) were illiterate, two fifths (40%) had secondary education and more than one-tenth (11%) were university graduates. Less than one third mothers (31%) were employed. Most participant mothers were married (97%). As regard number of children, more than one-third of the families (38%) had 1-2 children, less than half (46%) had 2-4 children while less than one-fifth (16%) had 5 children or more.

Table (2) shows that two fifths of children (40%) aged 6-11 months. Breastfeeding was the main type for feeding of more than one half of children during the first 6 months of life (55%). Time for starting bottle feeding was during the first 3 months of life

in more than one fifth (21%). However, half of mothers (50%) never started their bottle feeding. As regard usage of bottle for children, more than one fourth (26%) of children received artificial milk, less than one fifth (19%) received cow milk, while more than two fifths (42%) received warm fluids.

Table (3) shows that less than one third (32%) earn 200-399 LE, less than one-sixth (15%) of families earn less than 200 LE monthly. More than one third (35%) of the families had 7 members or more, less than half (49%) had 5-6 members, more than two fifths (44%) had 3-4 rooms, more than one-third of mothers (35%) had 1- persons/room, one third (33%) had less than one person/room, while one-sixth had 2- persons/room or 3 or more persons/room.

Table (4) shows that before the application of health promotion program, mean total knowledge

score of mothers about child care within the first two years of life was inadequate (47.25(9.85)). However, after the application of the health promotion program, the mean total knowledge score of mothers improved significantly (103.70(6.54, $p<0.001$). Prior to the application of the health promotion program, mean total practice score of mothers for care of their children within the first two years of life were inadequate (37.47(4.97)). However, after the application of the health promotion program, the mean total practice scores improved significantly (63.62(3.77, $p<0.001$).

Table (5) shows that mean total knowledge scores of mothers before and after the application of the program were significantly distributed according to their age, education, employment, income and crowding index, while mean total practice scores of mothers were significantly distributed according to their age, education, employment and income.

Table (1): Sociodemographic characteristics of participant mothers (n=100)

Variable	%
Age	
<20	9.0
20-	53.0
30-	31.0
40-	7.0
Education	
Illiterate	23.0
Read and write	16.0
Primary/Preparatory	10.0
Secondary	40.0
University	11.0
Employment	
Unemployed (housewife)	69.0
Employed	31.0
Marital status	
Married	97.0
Divorced	2.0
Widow	1.0
No. of children	
<3	16.0
3-	46.0
5+	38.0

