

INFANT FEEDING AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF PRE-SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

Worakanya Sinitsonghkun and Ruangvith Tantibhaedhyangkul

Department of Pediatrics, Phramongkutklao Hospital, Bangkok, Thailand

Abstract. Malnutrition in the midst of overnutrition occurs as a current worldwide phenomenon. Proper nutrition in the early stages of life is essential for appropriate nutritional status later in life. The study retrospectively collected data on infant nutrition and pre-school (three to four years of age) growth and eating pattern to explore how infant nutrition affected nutritional status of Thai children. The subjects were divided into 2 groups according to their feeding practice - the breastfeeding group (BF), $n = 30$, and the non-breastfeeding group (NBF), $n = 132$. Prevalence of underweight, stunting, wasting, and overweight/obesity of BF infants at pre-school age was 0, 0, 6.7, and 0%, respectively, while that of NBF infants was 3.8, 3.0, 4.5, and 4.5%, respectively. Compared to BF infants, NBF group had a significantly higher pre-school weight-for-age Z score, weight-for-height Z-score and body mass index (p -value = 0.002, 0.006 and 0.005, respectively), but prevalence of under- and over-nutrition were not significantly different between the two groups, and, in addition, BF infants consumed less sweetened drinks (p -value = 0.016). A longer duration of breastfeeding and subsequent inclusion of complementary feeding correlated with favorable pre-school eating habits, such as less consumption of non-nutritious snacks and sweetened drinks, and more fruit and cereal consumption. In conclusion, breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding were among the most important factors promoting healthy pre-school nutritional status and appropriate eating habits.

Keywords: breastfeeding, complementary feeding, infant feeding, infant nutrition, pre-school nutritional status

Correspondence:

Dr Ruangvith Tantibhaedhyangkul,
Department of Pediatrics, Phramongkutklao
Hospital, Bangkok 10400, Thailand.

Tel: +66 (0) 2763 4154, +66 (0) 2763 4148, +66 (0)
2763 4163; Fax: +66 (0) 2354 7827

E-mail: ruangvith@pedpmk.org