

## Frequency and reasons for early and late weaning among children 6-24 months of age presenting to a tertiary care hospital in Karachi

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Nutrition of the child has a pivotal role in growth and development. Globally, 22.2% of the world's children under five years are affected by stunting and 7.5% are wasted. The first two years of life are critically important. Multiple factors including maternal education, less access to basic health facilities, cultural norms and food myths, traditional practices without scientific basis, feeding diversity and patterns influence complementary feeding in Pakistan resulting in sub-optimal feeding. The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency & reasons for early & late weaning and their association with wasting, being underweight and stunting.

**Methodology:** All children of either gender from 6 months to 24 months who presented in outpatient clinics of Aga Khan University Hospital Karachi were enrolled. IYCF module was used for data recording.

**Findings:** Weaning was started at 6 months of age in 124 (59.9%) children, 39 (18.9%) children were started on weaning diet at <6 months of age while 44 (21.2%) children were started on weaning diet at >6 months of age. 133 (64.3%) children were of normal weight, wasting was present in 1 (0.5%) children and 73 (35.3%) children were underweight. Stunting was seen in 44 (21.3%) children whereas, 163 (78.7%) children were of normal height. Most common reason of early weaning was difficulty in feeding 50 (24.2%) children, whereas most common reason for late weaning was bottle feeding that was seen in 45 (21.7%) children.

**Conclusion:** Malnutrition in the form of stunting and underweight was present in our children, despite of the fact that majority of mothers started weaning at appropriate age. Provision of maternal education and knowledge about feeding practices along with proper timing of weaning can significantly improve height, weight and cognition of children.

### Biography

Ramla Mehmoed currently working in a remote area of her country to improve the standard of healthcare in less privileged and deprived areas. She has a key interest in Malnutrition as this is one of the commonest causes of mortality in lower income countries. She is keen to procure fundamental treaties like food. She believes that an effective and targeted strategy can be designed after evaluating different misconceptions behind inappropriate weaning, particularly in resource-limiting settings. This will help in ameliorating this dreadful ailment.