

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the knowledge and attitudes of Mothers/Caretakers with malnourished children aged 0-5 years towards feeding practices in Mwana Mugimu Unit-Mulago Hospital. In order to achieve this objective, three research objectives were formulated and these included: to determine the level of knowledge of mothers/caretakers with under nourished children towards feeding practices of children 0-5 years in Mwana Mugimu Unit-Mulago Hospital; to assess the attitudes of Mothers/Caretakers with under nourished children towards feeding practices of children 0-5 years in Mwana Mugimu Unit-Mulago Hospital; and to establish the feeding practices of children among Caretakers with under nourished children at Mwana Mugimu Unit-Mulago Hospital.

In the literature, different concepts opinions and research findings regarding knowledge and attitudes of mothers and caretakers towards feeding practices are analyzed. This helped to bring about a clear understanding of research concepts and variables.

In the research methodology, descriptive cross- sectional design was used; and care takers of children aged 0-5 years attending or admitted to the Mwana Mugimu Unit in Mulago Hospital formed the study population. Using the Fisher's formula, a sample size of 80 was determined and convenient sampling was used to sample respondents. An interviewer administered semistructured questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents and appropriate data collection methods were followed while collecting data. Data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages and this was done with the help of SPSS (16). Quality control measures were attained through validity and reliability of the research instruments.

The research findings indicated that 70 % of the mothers and caretakers did not have adequate knowledge about best practices of feeding; 83 % of the caretakers had positive attitudes towards breastfeeding and feeding practices but had not got any information about nutrition and feeding practices for their children; 73% of the mothers/caretakers' attitude towards their children's diet was negative. In overall, 86 % of the mothers and caretakers had bad feeding practices towards their

children. The study also found out that there is a positive correlation between knowledge and attitude of mothers/caretakers towards feeding practices and their feeding habits ($P < 0.932^{**}$ and sig. 0.000; and $P < .941^{**}$ and sig. 0.000 respectively).

The study concluded that the level of knowledge of mothers/caretakers of under nourished children is still low; mothers/caretakers have positive attitudes towards breastfeeding and feeding attitudes but have negative attitudes towards healthy diets of their children; majority of the mothers/caretakers exhibit bad practices and habits of feeding to their children; and that there is significant relationship between knowledge and attitudes of mothers/caretakers towards feeding practices.

It was therefore recommended that the government agencies should collaborate with other development agencies such as the NGOs, local community members and the media such that mothers can be educated about preferred feeding practices; family planning can be encouraged, food security should be promoted; girl-child education should be promoted; and employment opportunities should be promoted.